B

PRESENTED BY Mrs. E. SWASH, 1931

IN MEMORY OF HER LATE HUSBAND,
EDWARD SWASH,
AND HER LATE DAUGHTER,
DOROTHY EVELINE SWASH.

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HISTORY OF ENGLAND

FROM THE

CONCLUSION OF THE GREAT WAR IN 1815

BY

SIR SPENCER WALPOLE, K.C.B.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF LORD JOHN RUSSELL"

VOL. II.

NEW IMPRESSION

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CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER VI.

The Return of Queen Caroline.

	PAGE
Princess Charlotte in 1816	1
Her Marriage with Prince Leopold	2
Her Death	3
Marriages in the Royal Family	5
Death of Queen Charlotte	8
Arrangements on her Death	9
Death of the Duke of Kent	11
Death of George III.	12
Serious Illness of George IV.	13
The Princess of Wales in Italy	14
Her Suite	15
Her Chamberlain, Bergami	16
Her Conduct	18
Her Husband's Anxiety for a Divorce	19
Encouraged by Vice-Chancellor Leach	20
The Milan Commission	22
Brougham, the Princess of Wales' Adviser	23
His Desire for a Compromise	24
The Princess threatens to Return Home	26
Renews her Threat after the King's Death	27
Her Annoyance at the Omission of her Name from the Liturgy	30
Denman, her Solicitor-General	31
Alderman Wood, her Adviser	32
The Queen sets out for England	33
Refuses the Terms of the Ministry	34
She Arrives in England	35
Her Progress to London	35
Her Popularity and its Causes	37
Action of the Ministry	38
Negotiations for a Compromise	40
They Fail	43
Proceedings in the House of Lords	44
Report of the Secret Committee	45
The Queen's Progress to the Trial	47
The Scene in the House of Lords	48
The Counsel	49
The Trial	50
The Defence	52
The Queen's Witnesses	54
The Divorce Bill is read a Second Time	56
And is abandoned	57
The Queen's Dejection after her Victory	58
The Prorogation	59
Demonstrations during the Recess	60
Canning Leaves the Ministry	61
Peel Refuses Office	63
Parliament Meets	63
Decline of the Queen's Popularity	65
The Coronation of George IV. decided on	65
The Queen's Claim to be Crowned	67
And to Attend the Coronation	68

	PAGE
Her Protest on being Refused	68
She is Refused Admission to the Abbey	70
The Scene in Westminster Abbey	71
The Scene in Westminster Hall	72
The King's Visit to Ireland	74
The Queen's Death	75
Her Funeral	76
Sir R. Wilson removed from the Army for his Conduct at it	78
The King Lands in Ireland	80
His Reception by the Irish	81

CHAPTER VII.

The Commencement of the Flood Tide.

Effects of the Peace	83
Death of George III.	84
The Dissolution after his Death	85
The Civil List	87
Its Amount	88
The Hereditary Revenues of the Crown	89
Brougham Attacks the Civil List	90
The Prevalence of Distress	91
The Budget of 1820	92
The Political Truce during the Queen's Trial	94
The Passions which the Trial Produced	95
John Bull denounces the Queen	95
The Constitutional Association	97
Gradual Improvement in Trade	99
The Improvement does not Extend to Agriculture	100
The Causes of the Agricultural Distress	101
The Action of the County Members	102
The Distress of the Rural Districts Increases	104
The Agricultural Committee of 1821	105
The Disappointment at its Report	105
The Continuance of Distress	106
The Agricultural Committee of 1822	108
The Repudiation of the Debt and the Depreciation of the Currency Suggested	109
The House re-affirms Montague's Motion of 1691	110
Hume's Attack on the Receivers General	111
His Labours in the Cause of Economy	112
The Budget	114
The Weakness of the Ministry	114
The First Attempts to Reconstruct the Government	115
Its Junction with the Grenvilles	117
Renewed Demand for Repudiation	118
The Conversion of the Five per Cents.	119
The Creation of the Dead Weight Annuity	120
The Plan Fails, and is Modified	122
Civil Service Salaries Taxed	123
Renewed Demand for Economy	123
Reduction of Taxation	124
The Death of Lord Londonderry	125
George IV.'s Visit to Scotland	129
Canning becomes Foreign Minister	130
Other Changes in the Ministry	131
The Criminal Code	132
Appeals and "Wagers of Battel"	136
Mackintosh Suceeeds Romilly as a Criminal Law Reformer	137
His First Success in 1819	139
His Proceedings in 1820 and 1821	142
And in 1822	145
Peel Adopts his Views in 1823	146
The Law of Marriage	147
The Marriage Act Amended	150
The Budget of 1823	151
The Sinking Fund of 1823	152
The Navigation Act	153
Wallace's Efforts to Amend it	155
Wallace Resigns	156
The Commercial Policy of Huskisson	157
The Increasing Prosperity of the Country	158
The Growth of the Revenue	159
Part Repayment of the Austrian Loan	159
The Budget of 1824	160
The Repair of Windsor Castle	161
George III.'s Library presented to the British Museum	162
The First Formation of a National Gallery	163

	PAGE
Conversion of the Four per Cents.	165
The Abolition of Bounties	166
The Reduction of Taxation	168
The Spitalfields Acts and the Silk Trade	172
The Combination Acts	175
The Emigration of Artisans	177
The Exportation of Machinery	177
The Strike of 1824	179
The Law of Capital and Labour Revised	180
The Prosperity of 1824 and 1825	181
The Budget of 1825	183
Repeal of Taxation	184
The Commercial Reforms of 1823, 1824, and 1825 Summarised	187
The Causes which Produced the Prosperity of 1825	188
The Causes which Terminated it	190
The Financial Crisis of 1825	192
The Lessons which it Taught	193
Bill to Suppress Small Notes	194
The Letters of "Malachi Malagrowther"	195
The Small Notes Bill Confined to England	197
Hudson Gurney Procures its Modification	199
The Banking Systems of Scotland and England	200
Joint Stock Banks Established	200
The Ministry urged to Issue Exchequer Bills	201
They Refuse to do so	202
The Budget of 1826	203
The Corn Laws	204
Bill for Admitting Foreign Corn Temporarily	208
The General Election of 1826	209
The Ashantee War	212
Sir C. McCarthy's defeat	213
Colonel Purdon's Victory	215
The Death of the Duke of York	216
Wellington Receives the Command of the Army	216
The Duke of Clarence given a Larger Allowance	217
The Duke of York's Funeral	218
Lord Liverpool's Illness	218

CHAPTER VIII.

The Struggle for Civil and Religious Liberty.

Religious Intolerance	221
The Reformation	222
The Compromise Established at that Time	223
The Restoration	226
The Penal Laws against Dissenters	226
And against Roman Catholics	228
The English in Ireland	230
The Colonisation of Ulster	231
The Irish Policy of Cromwell	232
The Irish Policy of Charles II.	233
The Revolution	233
The Siege and Articles of Limerick	234
The Penal Laws of William III.	237
The Penal Laws of Anne	238
The Penal Laws of George I. and George II.	239
The First Measures of Relief	242
The American Rebellion and the Irish Volunteers	243
Further Measures of Relief	244
The Union	246
The Regency	250
Grattan in Parliament	251
His Death	255
Plunket's Motion in 1821	257
The Duke of York's Declaration	260
The King's Visit to Ireland	261
Disturbances which followed it	262
Condition of the Irish Peasantry	264
The Increase in their Number	264
The Relief Act of 1793	265
The Ejectment Act of 1816	268
Outrages in 1821	269
The Alarm of the Government	271
The Measures of the Government	273
The Famine of 1822	275
Relieved by English Charity and Public Grants	276
Canning's Motion respecting Roman Catholic Peers	277
Rejected in the House of Lords	279
The Play-House Riot	281
Plunket Prosecutes the Rioters	282
And is Attacked in Parliament	283
Dinner at the Beef Steak Club	285
The Quarrel between Canning and Brougham	286

	PAGE
Plunket Renews his Motion and is Defeated	288
Lord Nugent's Bill for the Enfranchisement of English Roman Catholics	288
Fresh Riots in Ireland	289
Irish Tithes	290
The Tithe Bill	291
Its Success	293
Associations	294
The Catholic Association	296
O'Connell	297
Select Committees on Ireland	298
The Irish Church Attacked	301
Alarming Condition of Ireland	303
Bill for Suppressing the Catholic Association	304
It becomes Law	306
And Fails	307
Roman Catholic Question Revived	308
The Wings of the Relief Bill	310
The Relief Bill passes the Commons	311
And is Rejected by the Lords	313
The General Election of 1826	313
The Duke of York's Last Effort	314
Abuses of Representative System	315
Lord Chatham as a Reformer	316
Wilkes	316
Pitt	317
Grey	319
The Demand for Reform increased by the Progress of the Nation during the War	319
And by the Distress which Succeeded it	322
The Demand for Reform Resisted in Parliament	323
Sir Manasseh Lopes convicted of Bribery	325
Lord John Russell	326
His First Efforts for Reform	327
The Disfranchisement of Grampound	328
Scotch Boroughs	332
Lord Archibald Hamilton	333
His Committee on the Royal Boroughs	334
The Reform Dinner at the London Tavern	335
Motions for Reform in Parliament in 1821	336
In 1822, 1823, and 1826	337
Scotch Counties	339
The Representation of Edinburgh	340

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLOSING YEARS OF GEORGE IV.

The Two Elements in Lord Liverpool's Ministry	343
The Discontent of the Tory Party	344
The General Distrust of Canning	345
His Illness in 1827	346
The State of Public Business. The Corn Laws	347
Claims of the Roman Catholics	348
The House of Commons Rejects a Motion for their Relief	350
Canning is Commanded to Form a Ministry	351
Deserted by Seven of his Colleagues	352
And Assisted by the Whigs	354
His Ministry	355
The Duke of Clarence Lord High Admiral	357
Palmerston Promoted to the Cabinet	357
Sir J. Copley made Chancellor	358
William Lamb Irish Secretary	358
Plunket Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in Ireland	359
The Irritation of the Tories	360
The Attacks upon Canning in the Commons	361
And in the Lords	362
The Whigs join the Ministry	363
The Corn Bill	364
Wellington moves an Amendment to it	364
Which Leads to the Loss of the Measure	366
The Death of Canning	367
The Formation of the Goderich Ministry	368
Herries Chancellor of the Exchequer	369
Dissensions in the New Ministry	371
Fall of the Goderich Ministry	373
The Duke of Wellington Minister	374
He is Joined by Huskisson	374

	PAGE
And by Lord Aberdeen and Lord Ellenborough	375
Attack upon Huskisson	376
Motion for the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts	378
Peel Proposes a Compromise	379
Which is Accepted	380
The Roman Catholics	381
The Corn Laws	382
Penryn and East Retford	384
Fresh Dissensions in the Cabinet	385
Which are Carried into the House	386
Huskisson Resigns	387
His Resignation Leads to Four others	388
The Reconstruction of the Ministry	389
Vesey Fitzgerald President of the Board of Trade	391
The Clare Election	392
Its Consequences	393
Lord Anglesey urges Concession	394
His Views shared by Peel and Wellington	394
The Duke of Clarence's Dismissal	395
Dawson's Speech at Derry	397
Lawless in Ulster	398
The Condition of Munster	399
O'Connell gives the Signal for Peace	399
Archbishop Curtis's Correspondence with the Duke	401
Lord Anglesey's Correspondence with O'Connell	402
Lord Anglesey Succeeded by the Duke of Northumberland	402
The King Consents to the Introduction of a Relief Bill	403
Indignation against Peel	404
The Election for Oxford	405
Agitation in the Country	406
The Catholic Association Suppressed	406
The King withdraws his Consent	407
But is Compelled again to give way	408
Emancipation Proposed in Parliament	409
The Disfranchisement of the Forty Shilling Freeholders	410
The Attorney-General's Attack upon his Colleagues	412
Scarlett and Sugden made Law Officers	414
Lord Winchilsea's Libellous Letter	415
His Duel with Wellington	416
The Duke's Excuse for his Conduct	417
The Relief Bill Carried	418
The Forty Shilling Freeholders Disfranchised	420
O'Connell Claims his Seat for Clare	422
The Claim Refused	424
The Second Clare Election	424
Fresh Disturbances in Ireland	425
Distress in Great Britain	426
Which the Protectionists ascribe to Free Trade	427
And which Leads to Riots	428
The State of Bethnal Green	429
The Distress of the Labouring Classes	430
The Speech from the Throne in 1830	432
The Government attacked in Parliament	433
Lord Blandford's Motion for Reform	435
Sir James Graham	436
His Motion for a Reduction of Salaries	437
Hume's Motion for a Reduction of Taxation	438
Goulburn's Measure of Retrenchment	438
Graham's Attack on the Ordnance Office	440
Other Motions of the Economists	441
Windsor Castle	442
The Budget	442
The Creation of Beer-Shops	444
Poulett Thomson's Motion for Free Trade	445
The Disorganisation of the Opposition	445
Lord Althorp selected for the Lead	446
The Illness of George IV.	447
His Death	448
The Accession of William IV.	449
Parliament is Dissolved	449

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RETURN OF QUEEN CAROLINE.

It is difficult at the present time to realise the solitary life which in 1816 was the lot of the princess who was the presumptive heiress to the throne of England. Her father, vexed at her refusal to marry the Prince of Orange, was subjecting her to unusual and unmerited restraints. Her mother, on whose affection she had hitherto relied, had abandoned the country where she had experienced so much unhappiness. Her grandfather, who in previous years had interposed in her behalf, was hopelessly insane; and her warm, impulsive disposition instinctively recoiled from the prim manners of her grandmother, the queen. With her mother's family she had no acquaintance; and the head of it, "Brunswick's fated chieftain," had just died a soldier's death in the last campaign. Though the princess was nearly twenty years old, the Regent refused her access to her most intimate acquaintances. She was only permitted to write to her warmest friend on condition that her letters passed through the hands of a lady-in-waiting. There seems even reason to think that her allowance was stopped, and that she had literally "no money of her own to spend on anything." Moved from Windsor to Weymouth, from Weymouth to London, from London to Weymouth, with little society and few amusements, the unhappy girl pined, grew thin, and slept badly. "It makes me sad to think," she wrote, "of the time past or

The Princess Charlotte.

the time to come: I don't know which is most painful, the past or the future."[1]

A better time, however, was speedily coming. A few years before, during the period of her engagement to the Prince of Orange, she had accidentally met, at Carlton House, Prince Leopold, the youngest of the three sons of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg. The prince had been "pointed out to her as a supposed admirer of a young lady of her acquaintance, and she" had "expressed her wonder, as he was so handsome, that the young lady did not seem more flattered by his attentions."[2] The princess's casual remark was, some time afterwards, repeated to the prince, and Leopold was consequently induced, after a decent interval, to pay his court to the heiress presumptive of the crown of England. The Regent was probably weary of the contest with his daughter. Prince Leopold had favourably impressed the people whom he had met on his previous visit to England; and it was the interest of all classes that "the fair-haired daughter of the isles" should marry. They all "fondly dreamed," with Byron, "our children should obey her child."[3] In these circumstances the negotiations for the marriage were rapidly brought to a successful issue. Parliament voted £60,000 for the princess's outfit, and £60,000 a year for her sustenance. Claremont, the beautiful seat of Mr. Ellis, was purchased for her residence; and, late after dinner on the 2nd of May, in accordance with the singular custom of the time, Princess Charlotte was duly married, in the drawing-room of Carlton House, to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg.

Her married life and death.

The remainder of Princess Charlotte's short life was spent in the happy society of her husband at Claremont. Admirably suited to each other, she loving him with all the force of her impulsive temperament, he gently checking the buoyancy of her spirits when they led her to exceed the "limits of dignity or prudence," the prince and

[1] Lady Rose Weigall's *Memoir of Princess Charlotte*, p. 148.
[2] Ibid., p. 133.
[3] *Childe Harold*, Canto iv. st. 170.

princess seem to have passed the happiest and the most domestic of lives. For a little more than a year nothing interrupted the even tenour of their days. In the autumn of 1817 it was known that the princess was expecting her confinement. On the 5th of November she was delivered, after a very severe and protracted illness, of a dead boy.[1] "She was too prostrate to realise the bitter disappointment. Yet even then she thought of her husband's sorrow, and sought to mitigate it by declaring herself the happiest wife in England. She only lived five hours longer." [2]

The untimely death of Princess Charlotte occasioned perhaps more general grief than any other public event in the present century. The nation had sympathised with the princess's sorrows, had rejoiced at her marriage, and had heard with pleasure and satisfaction of her quiet domestic life at Claremont.

> "Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds,
> A long low distant murmur of dread sound,
> Such as arises when a nation bleeds
> With some deep and immedicable wound.
> . . . . . .
> Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou?
> Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead?
> Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low
> Some less majestic, less belovèd head?"

Princess Charlotte's death was not, however, a mere source of sorrow to the multitude. It caused profound anxiety to statesmen. The Regent was married and separated from his wife. His next brother, the Duke of York, was married, but had no children. Of George III.'s remaining sons, the Dukes of Clarence, Kent, and Cambridge

The consequences of her death.

[1] The public were, at the time, disposed to blame the doctors. It does not seem, however, that they were to blame, except that they were too sanguine. One of them, Sir R. Croft, shortly afterwards destroyed himself; but there was no evidence to show that this unhappy act was attributable to the princess's death. It may be doubted whether, in any similar period of our history, four such distinguished men as Whitbread, Romilly, Sir R. Croft, and Lord Castlereagh committed suicide.

[2] Lady Rose Weigall, p. 165.

were unmarried; the Duke of Sussex had contracted a marriage with Lady Augusta Murray which had been declared invalid; and, though the fifth brother, the Duke of Cumberland, had married in 1815, neither the circumstances of his marriage nor the previous lives of himself and his consort made it desirable that the crown should descend to one of his children. The wife whom the Duke of Cumberland had chosen was a daughter of the reigning Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and therefore niece to Queen Charlotte. She had been twice married; first to the Prince of Prussia, and second to the Prince Salms Branfels, from whom she had been divorced. The Duke was married to her first at Berlin, and afterwards, in deference to the opinion of the law officers, at Carlton House. The Regent and three of his brothers, the Dukes of York, Clarence, and Kent, attended the ceremony. Queen Charlotte steadfastly refused either to attend the marriage or to receive the duchess. The opinion of the nation was with the queen. The ministers proposed that an addition of £6000 a year should be made to the Duke of Cumberland's income; and the proposal gave rise to the most violent debate. One member "appealed to the public voice for the truth of his assertion that of all the branches of the royal family the Duke of Cumberland was the one to whom the public feeling would be the least inclined to grant any pecuniary boon;" a second inquired whether the duke had rendered any services to his country which could entitle him to the grant; a third apprehended that the marriage was disagreeable to the royal family; a fourth asked whether it was true that the queen had declared that she would not receive the duchess at court, and whether she had not decidedly disapproved of a proposed marriage between the Princess of Salms and the Duke of Cambridge. A series of debates entailed a series of divisions, and a constant repetition of these damaging statements. The original motion for the grant was only carried by 87 votes to 70; the report was adopted by only 74 votes to 62. Leave to bring in a bill was granted by 75 votes to 62. The first reading was passed by

100 votes to 92; and finally the second reading was rejected by 126 votes to 125.[1]

The Duke of Cumberland had been deprived of the pecuniary advantage which he had perhaps reasonably expected to derive from his marriage. But there was one result of greater importance, which seemed imminent. The duchess, it was known, was expecting a child; and this child, after the Princess Charlotte, would, on the death of her royal uncles, be heir to the throne. The duchess was confined on the 11th of January 1817. But her child, a girl, was born dead. Comparatively little attention was paid, at the time, to the fact. Its importance was only appreciated in the following November, when the Princess Charlotte died, and when it was recollected that the Duke of Cumberland and his wife were getting on in years, and that their prospect of a family was consequently declining.

There is a common saying that great crises create great men; and, if a sarcasm be permissible, the saying proved true of the royal family in 1818. While their niece had lived the royal princes, abandoned to their own selfish pleasures, had no thought of marrying. But the death of their niece opened out to each of them a more ambitious prospect. Any one of them, it seemed possible, might have the honour of seeing one of his own children heir-presumptive to the throne. The Duke of Clarence, George III.'s third son, hastily married Adelaide, sister to the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen. The Duke of Kent, George III.'s fourth son, married a Princess of Saxe-Coburg—Victoria, the widow of the Prince of Leiningen; and George III.'s seventh son, the Duke of Cambridge, married Augusta, daughter of the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel. The death of one poor lady had induced the hasty marriages of her three old uncles!

Marriages in the royal family.

But the Regent's conduct was more extraordinary than that of his brothers. The death of their niece induced

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1815, Hist., p. 52.

them to take wives: the death of his daughter made the Regent try to get rid of his wife. On the first day of 1818, before the Princess had been dead eight weeks, he wrote to the Chancellor that he wished "to extricate himself" from "the cruellest, as well as the most unjust predicament that ever even the lowest individual, much more a prince, ever was placed in."[1] The deliberations of the Cabinet on this letter resulted in events which neither the Regent nor his advisers anticipated. The Cabinet was persuaded to send a Commission to Italy, where the Princess of Wales was residing, to inquire into the life she was leading. Nor was this concession to the Regent the only mistake which the Cabinet committed in 1818. The Regent's brothers had married for the sake of the country. They all of them desired to make a good thing out of their marriages. The Duke of Clarence wished to have his income of £20,500 a year raised to £40,000.[2] The Dukes of Kent and Cambridge desired to have their incomes raised from £18,000 to £30,000 a year; and they all proposed that in the first year of their marriage the additional grant should be doubled, in order that they might be able to bear the expense of an outfit. The Duke of Cumberland not unnaturally concluded that he in his turn should be put on the same footing as his other brothers. The

[1] Twiss's *Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 306.

[2] The curious in such matters will find an account of the gross incomes of these dukes in *Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. App. pp. l.-lii.; and *Ann. Reg.*, 1818, Chron. p. 62. The sums given in the text are the annuities charged on the Consolidated Fund. The Duke of Clarence, in addition, received £1095 as Admiral of the Fleet, and £187 as Ranger of Bushey Park. The Duke of Kent, £6517 as Governor of Gibraltar, £613 as Colonel of the Royal Scotch Regiment of Foot, and £73 as Ranger of Hampton Court Little Park. The Duke of Cumberland had £1008 as Colonel of the 15th Hussars; and the Duke of Cambridge £882 as Colonel of the Coldstream Guards. Each of the five brothers had been given £20,000 out of the Admiralty Droits; and the Duke of Clarence had received a loan of £20,000, the Duke of Kent of £6000, to be repaid by instalments. It appears that the instalments had been repaid very irregularly. It may perhaps be worth noting that the Duke of Clarence, soon after his marriage, procured a provision for his natural daughters. A pension of £2500 a year was granted to trustees in their favour on Sept. 9, 1818, out of the 4½ per cent. West India duties.—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. ix. p. 822. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron. p. 143.

Prime Minister undertook to recommend these arrangements to the consideration of Parliament. But, before doing so, he took the precaution of explaining them to a meeting of his own supporters. Nearly seventy of them assembled at Fife House, the residence of the Prime Minister; and to these seventy Liverpool announced the marriages of the royal princes, and the arrangements which were in consequence in contemplation. The effect was magical. "Nobody said a word, but everybody rose up and went away." Disapprobation was never "more strongly marked than by that silence."[1] "Some few mentioned their opinions privately to the minister." The disapprobation was so strong that the minister was compelled to modify his terms.[2] Instead of

[1] Bootle Wilbraham to Lord Colchester. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 43. *Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. p. 43.

[2] The amount which the royal family derived at that time from the public purse was as follows:—

	£	£
H.M.'s Household	898,000	
Ditto (by later Acts)	130,000	1,028,000
Prince of Wales		65,000
Princess of Wales		35,000
Duke of York	14,000	
	12,000	26,000
Duchess of York		4,000
Duke of Clarence	12,000	
	6,000	
	2,500	20,500
Duke of Kent	12,000	
	6,000	18,000
Duke of Cumberland	12,000	
	6,000	18,000
Duke of Sussex	12,000	
	6,000	18,000
Duke of Cambridge	12,000	
	6,000	18,000
Duke of Gloucester		14,000
Princess Sophia of Gloucester		7,000
Princess Augusta Sophia	9,000	
	4,000	13,000
Princess Elizabeth	9,000	
	4,000	13,000
Princess Mary	9,000	
	4,000	13,000
Princess Sophia	9,000	
	4,000	13,000
In trust for Prince Leopold		50,000
Total		£1,373,000

—*Ann. Reg.*, pp. 398, 402.

£19,500 he proposed only an additional £10,000 for the Duke of Clarence. Instead of £12,000 for the other brothers he proposed only an additional £6000. But even these modified terms were refused by Parliament. The Duke of Clarence was placed on the same footing as his other brothers and was offered an additional £6000, which, however, he declined to accept.[1] The Dukes of Cambridge and Kent had £6000 granted to them; but the additional £6000 to the Duke of Cumberland was refused. These arrangements, it was thought, were sufficiently liberal. The country was burdened with the cost which had been entailed on it by a tremendous war; misery and pauperism were visible in every village; and the policy which the Ministry proposed, and which Parliament rejected, was generally denounced as extravagant and inappropriate.[2]

The marriages in the royal family were on the whole attended with happy consequences. The Duchess of Clarence had two daughters, both of whom, however, died in infancy. The Duchess of Kent had one daughter, whose qualities were destined to repair the loss which the nation had sustained in the death of Princess Charlotte; the Duchess of Cumberland had one son, who ultimately survived to become King of Hanover; and the Duchess of Cambridge had one son and two daughters, all of whom are still living. The marriages of the royal princes had thus effectually removed the apprehension that no legitimate descendant might be found among all George III.'s numerous family. The danger of a disputed succession was entirely avoided.

Death of the queen.

Lost in his solitary apartments at Windsor, George III. was unconscious either of the marriages of his sons or of the births of his grandchildren. Wholly blind, wholly deaf, he moved through his stately chambers a living monument to his former greatness. Soon after the marriage of his sons, Queen Charlotte, his constant companion, died. Queen Charlotte had been naturally entrusted with the care of

[1] He accepted it shortly afterwards, with the arrears.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, vol. lx. pp. 84-93. *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 114, 118, 151.

the king's person. The trust, after her death, was transferred to the king's second and favourite son, the Duke of York. Financial arrangements of some importance became in consequence necessary. In 1812 Parliament had appropriated £100,000 a year to the king's household; and £58,000 a year to the queen's establishment. So long as it had been possible to entertain hopes of the king's recovery it was thought necessary to maintain the splendour of his establishment. But these hopes had long since ceased; £100,000 was clearly too large a sum for the maintenance of the infirm old king. It transpired, indeed, that the Queen's house, in St. James's Park, had been completed and furnished out of the surpluses of the grant;[1] and it was accordingly decided to reduce the vote in future from £100,000 to £50,000 a year. The allowance of £58,000 to the queen lapsed, of course, with her death; though it was necessary to pay certain pensions to old servants on her household; and these pensions were ultimately fixed at £25,000 a year. So far the proposals of the Ministry were adopted without much dissension. Ministers were, indeed, compelled to withdraw some of the pensions which they had proposed to allow to certain members of the late queen's household, but the principle of their measures was, up to this point, unanimously approved.[2]

Arrangements on her death.

The late queen had, however, enjoyed a grant of £10,000 a year as the king's custos; and the ministry proposed to assign this sum to the Duke of York as her successor. The proposal was exactly calculated to stir up a storm in Parliament. It was possible, moreover, to raise a strong argument against the propriety of the grant. The Duke of York could hardly desire to derive any pecuniary advantage from his father's lunacy; the utmost that he could require was that his expenses should be fully repaid to him. But it was impossible to suppose that these expenses could amount to £10,000 a year. The duke could hardly spend 10,000 shillings in posting from Oatlands to Windsor and from Windsor to Oatlands. Nor

[1] *Regency*, vol. ii. p. 302.

[2] Ibid. p. 302.

was it at all clear that the duke's expenses, whatever might be their amount, should be defrayed out of the public purse. The charge of every lunatic was a cost on his estate; and the principle, which was universally adopted in the Court of Chancery, ought, it was contended, to be followed in the case of the king. His Majesty had £50,000 a year for the expenses of the Windsor establishment; his privy purse amounted to £60,000; and the Duchy of Lancaster yielded another £10,000. The bill for the Duke of York's post horses might surely be paid out of this £120,000. The Duke of York was himself so dismayed at these arguments that it was announced that he wished to withdraw any claim for salary. But the Regent would not hear of his brother's moderation. He was not, perhaps, altogether displeased that the public odium should for the moment be transferred from himself to his presumptive heir. "So, sir, you want to be popular at our expense,"[1] was the answer which, it was rumoured, he gave to the Duke of York's appeal; and after this answer it became almost impossible for the duke to withdraw his application. Weak as the Ministry was, however, it was able to carry the vote by large majorities. Its usual supporters voted with it compactly; many of the more moderate members of the Opposition joined it on the occasion; and the £10,000 was accordingly voted. But, though the vote was granted by a large majority,[2] it was doubtful whether the additional income which the duke thus secured repaid the keen attack which the proposal of it excited. While Parliament was discussing grants of thousands to royal dukes the questions out of doors were, "How many more paupers must be consigned to our workhouses?" "How much more of misery and crime must exist?" Prudent men thought that it was hardly worth while, for the sake of an annuity of £10,000 dependent on the life of an old king tottering to his grave, to have such things said in the House of Commons.[3]

[1] *Regency*, vol. ii. p. 321.

[2] By 281 votes to 186; and later on by 247 votes to 137.

[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., pp. 9–26. *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 296–322 552–606, 664–708.

The death of the queen was followed, on the 23rd of January 1820, by the death of the Duke of Kent. The duke was perhaps the least unpopular of the sons of George III. Born on the 2nd of November 1767, educated partly abroad, and engaged, during the earlier years of his life, in active military service at Gibraltar and in Canada, he was fortunately spared from many of the temptations which ruined the characters of his other brothers. During his professional career he showed no great military talent, but he displayed in a remarkable degree the gallantry for which all his family was conspicuous. A stern disciplinarian, he was unpopular among his troops; and the storm which was created by his well-intentioned effort at Gibraltar to check the licentiousness and drunkenness of the garrison compelled him finally to retire from the governorship of this colony. From 1803 to 1816 he lived in this country; but in the course of 1816 he decided on residing abroad; and, with the exception of a short interval, he remained on the Continent till within a few months of his death. He returned to England in 1819, and, in the course of that year, his daughter, our present Queen, was born. The duke, soon after her birth, took a small cottage in the neighbourhood of Sidmouth. A long walk on a wet day, and a neglect to change his boots, brought on a severe cold which settled on the lungs; inflammation ensued; and, though his Royal Highness was, after the fashion of the period, freely bled, the relief did not save his life.

Death of the Duke of Kent.

The public heard with general regret of the duke's death. Those who had known him best were ready to speak favourably of his dignified bearing and his engaging manners. Those who did not enjoy any acquaintance with him had heard that, notwithstanding the embarrassment of his circumstances, he had always been ready to assist every charitable object. The country forgave his extravagances because they were associated with his charities. The birth of his infant daughter, too, had given the nation a new interest in his Royal Highness. It was already evident that the little orphan at Sidmouth might

possibly, or even probably, be Queen of England; and the Duke of Kent was therefore regarded not merely as the son of an afflicted king, but as the father of a future queen.

But the death of the Duke of Kent was soon forgotten in the occurrence of a still more engrossing event. Six days after the Duke's death, George III. died suddenly at Windsor. For nearly ten years he had lived in complete obscurity, bereft of his reason, bereft of his sight, bereft of his hearing. He had been ignorant of the great victory which had been won by his people; he had been ignorant of the changes which had occurred in his own family. Those among his subjects who as children had remembered him as king, had grown up to man's estate in the interval of his retirement. Those who, as men and women, had known him as their monarch, had passed from the prime of life into old age. Yet they had none of them forgotten their venerable sovereign. The whole nation was unaffectedly moved by the news of his death. His long public life had much to attract their attention. The numerous vicissitudes of his reign, the splendid triumphs with which it had been concluded, were subjects with which every one was familiar. But the nation generally dwelt more on the private virtues of the old sovereign than on all the great achievements which had been accomplished in his lifetime. They saw in him a model of an English gentleman—pure in his domestic life, frugal in his expenses, friendly to his neighbours, kindly to his dependents, charitable to the poor, faithful to his creed; and, though for ten years he had been isolated from all his friends, his simple virtues, and his dignified manners, were still the common story among them all.

Death of George III.

The death of George III. did not create a single void in the machinery of the State. He had been politically dead so long that his actual death necessitated only a change of names, and hardly caused the alteration of a single arrangement. The Regent became king; the Duke of York became heir-presumptive; the little child, whose father had just died suddenly at Sidmouth, was brought one step nearer to the throne. But

the new king had for all intents and purposes been king for the last ten years. Every one was acquainted with his character. Every one knew the little that could be said for his external qualifications. Every one had heard the much that could be said against his extravagance, his intemperance, and immorality. There was no speculation on the character of the new monarch, because his most unfortunate character was already sufficiently plain. But, if there were no speculation about the character of the new monarch, there was considerable doubt whether he would be spared to enjoy his new dignity. The morning after George III. died, George IV. held a council, at which the ministers were formally reappointed and the councillors were formally sworn. His Majesty addressed a few silvered words of promise to his councillors, and took the usual oaths required by the law. But the ceremony was hardly over before it was known that the new king was seriously ill. He had for some days had a severe cold; and the excitement of the week had increased his disorder, and brought on the disease of which the Duke of Kent had just died, inflammation of the lungs. The drastic treatment of his physicians ultimately subdued the more serious symptoms, and the king, as the chroniclers of the time phrased it, "fortunately" recovered.[1] It is doubtful whether any modern historian would repeat the adverb. In every respect but one it was a matter of little moment whether George, or Frederick, or William filled the throne of their father. But in one respect any of the other princes would have been preferable to their elder brother. The accession of George IV to the throne unhappily brought to an issue the numerous questions involved in his separation from his wife. His death would have saved the people of England a distressing chapter in their recent history.

Illness of George IV.

It will be remembered that the Princess of Wales left England in the course of 1814. She was accompanied by two English ladies, Lady Charlotte Lindsay, a daughter of the Earl of Guilford, and Lady Elizabeth Forbes; by Mr. St. Leger, Sir William Gell and the Hon. Keppel Craven,

The Princess of Wales.

[1] *Ann Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 17.

her chamberlains; and by Doctor Holland, her physician. She proceeded in the first instance to Brunswick, and from Brunswick she went to Milan. At Milan it became necessary to engage a courier; and her chamberlain applied to the Marquis Ghisiliari, the grand chamberlain of the Emperor of Austria, who had been appointed to attend on the princess, for a suitable person. The marquis recommended one Bartolomeo Bergami. Bergami had been in the service of General Pino, an Italian officer, and seems to have been on unusually intimate terms with the marquis himself.[1] With this addition to her establishment the princess proceeded from Milan to Florence, from Florence to Rome, and from Rome to Naples. She arrived at Naples on the 8th of November 1814, and she left it in March 1815. In that month the princess went to Civita Vecchia, and embarked on board the *Clorinde*, an English man-of-war, for Genoa. She stayed at Genoa till the 15th of May, when she went to Milan, and resided for some months at the Casa Borromeo, in the immediate vicinity of that town. After a short excursion to Venice she returned to Milan, where she stayed at the Villa Villani; and in August of the same year she visited the Mont St. Gothard, Bellinzona, Lugano, and finally established herself on the margin of the Lake of Como, in the well-known Villa d'Este. On the 15th of November 1815, the princess again returned to Genoa, embarked on the *Leviathan*, an English man-of-war, and, after a short visit to Elba, proceeded to Palermo. She stayed at Palermo for ten days, from the 26th of November to the 6th of December, when she removed to Messina. She resided at Messina till the 6th of January 1816, when she embarked on board her old friend, the *Clorinde*, for Syracuse. From Syracuse she moved in February to Catania, and in March to Augusta. At Augusta she hired a polacre, a vessel of 260 tons' burden, and proceeded in it to Tunis. From Tunis she went to Utica, Savona, and Athens, which she reached on the 22nd of April. She subsequently visited Constantinople, Ephesus,

[1] See Sir W. Gell's evidence that the marquis kissed Bergami on parting from him. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 1063.

Troy, and Jerusalem; and, re-embarking on board the polacre in August, after touching at Syracuse, landed in September at Terracina. From Terracina she returned to the Villa d'Este.

After a short residence in the Villa d'Este and at a place in the neighbourhood, the Barona, which she had bought for Bergami, the princess, in February 1817, commenced another tour. She visited on this occasion Scharnitz, Innspruck, Munich, Carlsruhe, Vienna, Trieste, and Venice, and returned to the Barona in April 1817. In July she journeyed to Rome, where she took the Villa Brande; and in August she proceeded to Pesaro. The counsel for the king did not accurately trace her movements after this point; and, as the charges, which were subsequently preferred against her, all related to her life anterior to 1817, it is not necessary to do so here. It is sufficient to remark—for her apology must mainly depend on the fact—that from her departure in England she had led a nomad life, visiting strange places, necessarily introduced to strange society, and compelled, whatever were her inclinations, to put up with strange quarters.

Her English suite left her at a very early period of her travels. Lady Charlotte Lindsay[1] joined the queen at Naples in March 1815, travelled with her from Naples to Rome, from Rome to Civita Vecchia, and from Civita Vecchia, on board the *Clorinde*, as far as Leghorn. Lady Elizabeth Forbes had previously left her Royal Highness at Naples.[2] Lady Charlotte Campbell, who joined the princess

Her suite.

[1] Lady Charlotte Lindsay was the daughter of Frederick, second Earl of Guilford, better known as Lord North. She married the Honourable James Lindsay. Lady Charlotte Campbell was the daughter of the fifth Duke of Argyll. She married first Colonel L. Campbell, and second the Rev. E. Bury. The princess offered to make one of her daughters a bedchamber woman, with £200 a year. (See *Diary of the Life and Times of George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 165.) Lady Charlotte Bury was supposed to be the author of a good deal of the *Diary*. There is strong internal evidence, however, to prove that she was not the author of the greater portion of that scandalous book, though she was on intimate terms with the writer.

[2] "Je serai absolument sans dame," was the princess's own phrase at Rome. (*Diary*, vol. ii. p. 165.) "Lady Charlotte Lindsay and Monsieur F. North sont les seules personnes qui m'accompagne (*sic*), mais ils sont obligée (*sic*) de me quitter alors pour se rendre en Angleterre. . . Lady E. Forbes se

on her arrival at Genoa, left her two months afterwards at Milan. Mr. St. Leger was not with the princess in Italy. Sir William Gell and Mr. Craven left the princess at Naples, and Dr. Holland left her on her first visit to Venice. The whole of her original suite, therefore, left her before she had been a year in Italy. The only English gentlemen who were regularly attached to her service afterwards were two officers of the navy, Lieutenant Flinn and Lieutenant Hownam. Lieutenant Flinn was settled at Messina when the princess visited it at the close of 1815; and, at her Royal Highness's desire, arranged for the hire of the polacre, which carried her to Tunis and the East, and commanded it during the voyage. Lieutenant Hownam, also a lieutenant in the navy, was the son of one of her pages, and had passed his life in her service and in that of the Princess Charlotte. He joined the princess in April 1815, and remained with her throughout her subsequent adventures from 1815 to 1818.

The retirement of the majority of her English suite compelled the princess to turn elsewhere for attendants; and she was, perhaps unavoidably, driven to take her new servants from the country in which she was mainly residing. Bartolomeo Bergami had been engaged, almost on her entrance into Italy, as courier and valet; but, though he continued for some months to discharge the menial duties of a courier, he was soon treated with a marked consideration by his mistress.[1] He assisted her to change a fancy dress which she wore at a masked ball in Naples; he breakfasted with her at Genoa; he was regularly admitted to her dinner-table after the princess's visit to Lugano; he was promoted to the dignity of chamberlain almost immediately afterwards; he was advanced,

Bergami.

rende en Angleterre. Monsieur Craven chez sa mère à Paris. Monsieur Hesse pour l' Angleterre, et je crois que Sir William Gell reste encore quelque temps à Naple (*sic*)."—*Diary*, vol. ii. p. 176.

[1] The author (or one of the authors) of the *Diary of the Life and Times of George IV.* says of Bergami, in 1815: "The first person who opened the door to me (at Genoa) was the one whom it was impossible to mistake, hearing what is reported: six feet high, a magnificent head of black hair, pale complexion, mustachios which reach from here to London. Such is the Stork."—*Diary*, vol. ii. p. 195.

either at the princess's instigation or, at any rate, with the view of affording her pleasure, to the dignity of a Knight of Malta at Catania; he was made Baron della Francina at Augusta; and he was presented with a considerable estate, near Milan, which the princess purchased for him, and to which she gave the name of the Villa Bergami. More intimate familiarities had, moreover, certainly taken place. During the princess's voyage from Augusta to Tunis, and from Tunis to the East, during her stay in the Holy Land, and during her return to Italy, she had usually slept under a tent, erected on board the polacre, when she was at sea, or at any convenient spot when she was on land. There is no doubt whatever that Bergami frequently, if not always, slept under the same tent. The princess required the protection of a male attendant, and she selected Bergami for the purpose. It is not surprising that a servant, promoted with so much rapidity and honoured with so much familiarity, should have received more open marks of favour. At Jerusalem the princess instituted an order of "St. Caroline of Jerusalem," and she made Bergami, the Baron della Francina, Grand Master. Bartolomeo Bergami, through the favour of his mistress, had become in a few months a Knight of Malta, a baron, a Grand Master of the Order of St. Caroline, and the owner of a considerable estate. The sailors on board the polacre coupled his name with the princess, and drank to them together.

During the same period other members of Bergami's family were advanced to situations in the princess's service. The Countess Oldi, his sister, became her lady-in-waiting; Faustina, another sister, superintended the linen; his little child, Victorine, slept in the princess's bedroom; his brother, Louis, was made her equerry. His cousin, Bernardo, was made prefect of the palace; his cousin, Francisco, accountant. Faustina's husband, Martini, was also in the princess's service; and Bergami's mother paid the princess a two months' visit.[1] His wife, alone among his nearest relations, does not seem to have been admitted into the princess's company. She lived

[1] See Carlo Forti's evidence, *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 1076.

quietly and respectably at Milan; she refrained from assuming the titles which had been bestowed on her husband, and shared neither the rank which he had gained nor the society into which he had been admitted. The exclusion of Bergami's wife from the honours which all his other relations enjoyed was regarded by the princess's enemies as a circumstance nearly as suspicious as the advancement of Bergami.

The princess's conduct.

The few facts which have thus been mentioned are the most important of those which were ultimately proved against the princess. It is not necessary to sully a work, which is intended for general reading, with a detail of the lighter rumours which were whispered on all sides, or with a recital of the more indelicate charges which were not decisively established. But it is only fair to the princess's memory to add that it is possible to advance excuses for her most indiscreet behaviour which would not be available in the case of an ordinary lady. Any lady, indeed, who chose to travel to Jerusalem in the earlier years of the present century was necessarily compelled to submit to hardships which would have been peculiarly distressing to a woman of a refined nature. On one occasion in the East, for instance, she had to lie down in a cattle-shed with the rest of her suite. A lady prepared to herd with her attendants in this way might have seen less harm than a more sensitive person in sleeping under the same tent with a male attendant. The apology should be stated, because it is the only excuse which it is possible to offer for the indiscretions which, if the princess were innocent, she undoubtedly committed. The nature of the princess was, indeed, anything but sensitive. Her personal habits were extraordinary. Every one in her household had a nickname. She herself was "Mrs. Thompson," William Austin was "Willikin;" Sir William Gell, "Bluebeard;" Lady Anne Hamilton, "Joan of Arc." Those who liked the princess best had little opinion of her discretion. The improprieties of which she was guilty may, perhaps, be inferred from the gratification which her suite expressed when their mistress

happened to be discreet either in her dress or in her behaviour. One of the authors of the "Diary," for instance, remarks, in 1815: "She had no rouge on, wore tidy shoes, and looked altogether uncommonly well." Soon afterwards, on another occasion, he observes: "Her dress, conversation, and manners happened by some lucky chance to be all perfectly proper."[1] "Perfectly proper," was not, unfortunately, the description which could ordinarily be applied to the princess. She adopted in 1802 the son of Sophia Austin; and, though she had in consequence brought upon herself the charges which led, in 1806, to the "Delicate Investigation," the boy whom she thus adopted regularly occupied her bedchamber till after her entrance into Italy in 1814. She only removed him then on the remonstrance of her chamberlains that he was too old to sleep in the same room as herself. It is difficult to do justice to a person who could uniformly act in so unguarded a manner. No lady would consent to sleep under the same tent with a man who was not her husband; but no lady would consent to sleep in the same room with a big boy of thirteen who was not her own child. Yet the princess did the latter without apparently perceiving the indelicacy of her act. Is it possible that she may have failed to see the impropriety of sleeping in the same tent with Bergami.

Rumours of the strange life which the princess was leading were continually brought to this country. They necessarily attracted the attention of the Regent, and were the subject of the anxious consideration of the Ministry. The Prince. The Regent had always desired to get rid of his wife; but his anxiety to do so was increased after the death of his only daughter in the autumn of 1817. His ministers foresaw the difficulty of gratifying their master. Every argument which could be employed against the princess could be turned with crushing effect against her husband. The prince had commenced the quarrel by withdrawing himself from his wife's society, and had notified his intention to do so in a brutal

[1] *Diary*, vol. ii. pp. 195, 238.

letter.[1] Ever since the date of that letter he had been notoriously living an immoral life. No private gentleman could have ventured in such circumstances to apply for a divorce. His application would have been rejected by the Legislature without a moment's hesitation. The Ministry might fairly say that the prince should hesitate to prefer an application which none other of his father's subjects would venture to bring. Experience, too, had made them cautious. On every previous occasion on which the prince had attacked his wife the princess had achieved a quasi-victory over her husband. The four lords who had conducted the "Delicate Investigation" in 1806 had acquitted her of the main charge brought against her. An informal inquiry, instituted by the prince in 1813, before a select committee of Privy Councillors, had led to a popular demonstration in her favour. The princess, moreover, was abroad. It was both prudent and politic to induce her to stay abroad. The puddle might pass for clean water till it was stirred. It was sheer folly to stir it, and prove to every one that it was only mud.

There was, however, among the prince's advisers an able and ambitious lawyer, endowed with unusual talents, but free from the responsibilities attaching to office. Sir John Leach, a member of the Whig party, had, for years, been on intimate terms with the Regent. He had been presented in 1816 with the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Cornwall, and had retired from Parliament on accepting the office. His Parliamentary career had not been very distinguished; and his friends, though they were annoyed at his desertion, did not suffer from his loss. Yet his talents were very considerable. "He has," wrote Romilly, "great facility of apprehension, considerable powers of argumentation, and remarkably clear and perspicuous elocution. . . . He is extremely deficient in knowledge as a lawyer. All that he knows he has acquired, not by any previous study . . . but by his daily practice. This has thrown in his way a great deal of desultory information, which

Vice-Chancellor Leach.

[1] This letter, properly called a "Letter of License," will be found in *The Book*, and in *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 1053.

a good memory has enabled him to retain. In judgment he is more deficient than any man possessed of so clear an understanding that I ever met with. . . . Constant attendance at the opera and at the gayest assemblies appears, in his opinion, to be as necessary to the support of his reputation as his presence in Westminster Hall; and he prides himself upon hastening every night from the dull atmosphere of the Rolls and Lincoln's Inn to the brilliant circles of high birth and fashion." "He aspires undoubtedly to the highest offices, and is flattered with the expectation of succeeding Lord Eldon as Chancellor."[1] Later on, when he became Vice-Chancellor, his own quickness and Eldon's doubts were commemorated in the saying that of the two Presidents of the Court of Equity with one you never had the oyer, and with the other you never had the terminer.

Leach acted, in virtue of his office, as the prince's principal legal adviser; and, in that capacity, was consulted upon the princess's conduct. Several reports, unfavourable to her Royal Highness's character, had already reached this country. Captain Pechell, who commanded the *Clorinde*, and who had twice conveyed her Royal Highness and suite in that vessel, reported to the Admiralty the honours to which Bergami had been promoted. In 1817 the chambermaid of the inn at Carlsruhe deposed to some improprieties between the princess and Bergami, during their stay at that town, and her depositions were forwarded to this country. In the autumn of the same year the Regent laid before Leach "a large mass of papers, containing information from private and public sources with respect to the princess," and desired a report upon them. Leach reported that the "papers contained matter of grave and serious charge, and recommended that proper researches should be made in the countries where the princess had resided, and through which she had travelled, for such further information as might exclude all doubt with respect to the character of her conduct." Leach's report was, of course, submitted to the Cabinet; and the Cabinet, though it declined to institute the inquiry, undertook to bear the cost of it. Two gentlemen, Mr.

[1] Romilly, vol. iii. pp. 215, 216.

Cooke, a member of the Chancery Bar, and Mr. Powell, a solicitor, were, on Leach's nomination, and with the concurrence of the Prime Minister and the Chancellor, sent out to Italy, and "placed in communication with the public authorities in the countries which they had occasion to visit." The Commission assembled at Milan in September 1818; it reported on the 10th of July 1819; and its report was immediately submitted to the Cabinet.[1] But the Cabinet had already been attentively considering the matter. The princess's case had, in the previous month, been submitted to it by her Royal Highness's principal adviser; and a formal proposal for an arrangement was actually under consideration.

The Milan Commission.

The princess in her past life had found many advisers; but one by one they had abruptly been taken from her. When the Delicate Investigation was instituted into her conduct she had found in Perceval an untiring defender. Perceval was prematurely killed; and the news of his death affected the princess as nothing had ever affected her before. "I never saw her so deeply affected before or since," said one who was with her at the time. "I have lost my best friend," she said the next day; "I know not where to look for another."[2] Her choice was, in fact, restricted. Friendship with the princess involved enmity with the prince; and every public man, who desired office or any favour from the Court, studiously avoided frequenting the princess's establishment at Kensington. Whitbread had little expectation of office, and he was too independent to adapt his conduct to the wishes of the prince. He became the princess's adviser. But the princess and her suite never felt towards Whitbread as they had towards Perceval. They suspected him, probably unjustly, of party motives; and they consequently regarded his advice with suspicion. Whitbread's friendship was, however, of no slight advantage to the unhappy lady; and his violent death again deprived her of her most experienced adviser. After Whitbread's death her cause was

[1] Yonge's *Lord Liverpool*, vol. iii. pp. 12, 13
[2] *Diary*, vol. i. pp. 157–163.

almost wholly sustained by the vigour and ability of Brougham. Brougham's character has already been sketched in these pages. His was the most prominent figure on the Opposition benches of the House of Commons. His was the most prominent figure throughout the stirring events which followed the princess's return to this country in 1820. His name will for ever be associated with the efforts which he made for his royal mistress. The princess could not have found an abler advocate than Brougham; it is possible that she might have found a more judicious counsellor. Brougham's advice was, indeed, usually sound, but it was sometimes tendered at an unhappy moment. Intimately as he knew her Majesty, he hardly understood all the eccentricities of her character. Great as were his services towards her, he never succeeded in obtaining her entire confidence. Brougham.

Brougham seems to have formed a slight acquaintance with the Princess of Wales in the course of 1809; and to have been formally consulted by her for the first time on the position of the Princess Charlotte towards the latter end of 1810. In 1812 and in 1813 he was her habitual adviser on the communications which she addressed, both to the queen and the prince, on the subject of her daughter's education. In 1813 he drew up the letter to the prince which instigated the inquiry instituted during that year into her conduct. In 1814 he was again called upon to advise her under very difficult circumstances. During the short interval of peace in 1814–15 the Emperor of Russia and other foreign potentates visited England. The queen held a drawing-room for their reception; and, as the prince positively declined to meet his wife in public, her Majesty was compelled to intimate to the princess the necessity for her absence. The princess, without consulting Brougham, wrote what her adviser subsequently called "a mealy mouthed" letter, and agreed not to go to Court. Brougham saw her error, and had the adroitness to turn it to excellent account. He prepared for the princess's signature a formal remonstrance, to be addressed by her to the prince, stating that "motives of

personal consideration" towards the queen had induced her to refrain from exercising her "right of appearing before her Majesty" at the public drawing-rooms, but intimating distinctly that she would not submit to be treated as guilty. "Occasions may arise (one, I trust, is far distant) when I must appear in public, and your Royal Highness must be present also. Can your Royal Highness have contemplated the full extent of your declaration? Has your Royal Highness forgotten the approaching marriage of our daughter, and the possibility of our coronation?"[1]

His doubts and his advice.

But, though Brougham was the constant adviser of the Princess of Wales from the close of 1810 to the period at which she had left England, he does not seem at this period to have had much faith in her innocence. Before he allowed her to write to the prince in 1813 he had the courage and prudence to tell her that "she must review her whole past life, and if there was anything in it which would not bear the light, . . . then the letter must not be sent to the prince."[2] The way in which she received his warning gave him some uneasiness; and it seems fair to infer that this uneasiness was not wholly dispelled by the message which he subsequently received from her that "the letter must go." In 1819, again, when the Milan Commission was reporting, Brougham was clearly of opinion that it was best for all parties to patch up the quarrel. He was prepared to advise the princess to agree to a formal separation; to waive the right of coronation; and to adopt, after her husband's accession to the throne, some subsidiary title, such as Duchess of Cornwall, on condition that her annuity should be assured to her after the demise of the crown. This proposal Brougham put in writing and communicated to Lord Hutchinson, who, as a friend of both parties, seemed admirably adapted for the office of mediator.[3]

[1] *Life of Lord Brougham*, vol. ii. pp. 215, 225. [2] Ibid., p. 166.
[3] Yonge's *Lord Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 16, where the letter is given. It is referred to in *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 123.

The Regent was indisposed to acquiesce in the arrangements suggested in this letter. Ever since his daughter's death he had desired to marry again; and a mere separation from his wife, without a formal divorce, was, therefore, insufficient for him. Two days after the date of Brougham's letter to Lord Hutchinson, "he again pressed on the ministers his desire for a divorce." The ministers replied that a divorce "never could be accomplished by arrangement, nor obtained" until the princess's guilt was "substantiated by evidence before some tribunal in this country." "Such a proceeding," they added, "could not be instituted without serious hazard to the interests and peace of the kingdom. On the other hand, the separation, which already exists . . . might be rendered complete . . . by some arrangement upon the principles suggested" by Brougham. The arrangement, however, could not be entertained "unless the proposition and the terms of it were distinctly stated to originate on the part of the Princess of Wales, and to be sanctioned by her authority." The prince retorted that it seemed to him doubtful whether such an arrangement as Brougham contemplated could be effected without the proofs which would justify a divorce; but that the report of the Milan Commission would afford "the clearest and most decisive proof of guilt." The Ministry, in a very remarkable memorandum, replied that, "considering the manner in which a great part of this testimony has unavoidably been obtained, and the circumstance that the persons who have afforded it are foreigners, many of whom appear to be in a low station in life, it would not be possible to advise your Royal Highness to institute any legal proceeding upon such evidence without further inquiry as to the character and circumstances of the witnesses by whom it is to be supported;" and that "it appears to be more prudent to abstain from taking any further step in the matter under all the present circumstances."[1]

So ended the first scene in the last act of this strange

[1] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 21.

drama. Brougham's proposal was left in abeyance, first, because it failed to satisfy the prince, and, second, because it had not been distinctly authorised by the princess. The Regent's counter-proposition was vetoed, from the reluctance of the Ministry to adopt it. The first scene had, however, been hardly concluded before the second scene unexpectedly commenced. The princess wrote an angry letter to Lord Liverpool, announcing her intention of returning to England. In the previous year she had filed a bill in Chancery upon the subject of an alleged debt due to her from the executors of her brother, the Duke of Brunswick. Count Munster, one of the duke's executors, thereupon filed an affidavit, alleging doubts as to the genuineness of the documents on which the princess was relying to support her claim. The interminable delay of a Chancery suit irritated her Royal Highness. She decided that her own presence would expedite matters, and announced both to Liverpool and Brougham her intention to return to England. The news hardly created less consternation in her principal adviser than in the Ministry itself. Brougham and the Ministry both saw the inconvenience of her proposed visit. The princess came as far as Lyons to meet Brougham; but Brougham, instead of meeting her, remonstrated with her for coming. His remonstrance for the time prevailed: the princess slowly retraced her steps. On the 8th of January 1820, she changed horses at Genoa,[1] on her way from Marseilles to Rome. Lord Colchester, who was staying at Genoa at the time, happened to see the two "battered old German calèches" which conveyed her and her suite. The princess, Bergami, and a Frenchwoman occupied the first carriage; Bergami's brother and sister, William Austin, and "another female" the second. The cloud which had loomed on the horizon rolled away with the princess's retreat, and no symptoms of the approaching storm remained.

The princess threatens to return to England.

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 111. Lord Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 22. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 123.

But, before the month was over, the death of George III. changed the whole situation, and precipitated a fresh crisis. The Princess had become Queen. It had been the immemorial practice of the Privy Council on the commencement of a new reign to order the necessary changes in the Liturgy of the Church. It had been almost the invariable practice of the Church to pray by name for the king's consort and the heir-apparent.[1] The old prayer in the Litany, for instance, before the death of Queen Charlotte, had run thus: "That it may please Thee to bless and preserve our gracious Queen, Charlotte, their Royal Highnesses George Prince of Wales, the Princess of Wales, and all the Royal Family." If precedent had been strictly followed the new clause would have run: "That it may please Thee to bless and preserve our gracious Queen, Caroline, and all the Royal Family." The new king was, however, determined that his Queen should not receive the title of Queen. His Ministers were ready to compromise the matter. They were willing to consent to the omission of her name from the Liturgy on condition that no penal proceedings of any kind whatever should be attempted against her; one of them, indeed (Canning), declared that he "could not have agreed to the omission of her name if any penal process, of whatever kind, had been in contemplation." The Cabinet at once gave the necessary order for the alteration of the Liturgy in accordance with this arrangement. Their minute was dated the 10th of February, and on the 12th of February the "Gazette" contained the usual notice. The 12th of February was a Saturday. The "Gazette" did not reach the country clergy before the Sunday's service, and

Death of George III.

The Queen's name omitted from the Liturgy

[1] The curious about such matters will find the subject fully discussed in the *Debates* in 1821. All that could be said upon the matter was then urged by Wetherell and Mackintosh on one side, and the Attorney-General on the other. The precedent which was most relied on by the Government was that of the wife of George I. It was not disputed on either side that George I.'s wife was not prayed for as queen. The Opposition, however, replied that she was not prayed for because she was divorced from the king, and for eighteen years before his accession had been a prisoner. The Government, on the contrary, denied the divorce. (See *Hansard*, New Series, vol. iv. pp. 139–219.)

the majority of them, left to their own devices, followed the ordinary and rational course. For one Sunday at least, in nearly every parish church in England, the people prayed Almighty God "to bless and preserve our gracious Queen, Caroline, and all the Royal Family." [1]

The middle course which the Ministry adopted did not satisfy the king. His Majesty received the decision of the Cabinet with extreme indignation. He seems to have consulted Leach, and with Leach's assistance to have drawn up a reply to the minute of the Ministry. In his written reply, the king contented himself with attempting to controvert the conclusions of his ministers; but he gave them privately to understand that if they were not prepared to recommend a divorce he was determined to change his Government, or even to retire to Hanover.[2] The Cabinet met again on the Sunday, and prolonged its sitting till two o'clock on the Monday morning. "The Cabinet sat for thirteen hours" on Sunday, wrote Phillimore to Lord Buckingham; "there was a general report that ministers had resigned." "I consider the Government as virtually dissolved," wrote Castlereagh, "and that the existing ministers only hold their situations till their successors are named." [3] The Cabinet, however, had the firmness to maintain its opinions; and the king, as was his invariable practice, retracted his threats and submitted to advice. But the difficulties of the Ministry were not terminated by this victory over the sovereign. Parliament, which had met on the 2nd of February, had been formally adjourned to Thursday, the 17th. During the previous week some wag, with as much dexterity as wit, had placarded the metropolis, particularly the neighbourhood of Carlton House and Whitehall, with the following proclamation:—

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[1] Yonge's *Lord Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 31. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 32.

[2] Cf. Alison's *Lives of Castlereagh and Stewart*, vol. iii. pp. 118, 119; Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. pp. 24, 34.

[3] Greville, *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 24; Alison's *Lives of Castlereagh and Stewart*, vol. iii. p. 119; Duke of Buckingham's *Memoirs of the Court of George IV.*, vol. i. p. 8.

Long live the King,
His Majesty
George the Fourth,
And the Queen Consort,
Her Majesty
Caroline!
May they live and reign together
For ever and ever!
Huzza! Huzza![1]

On the 18th, the day after Parliament met, Hume, the member for Aberdeen, inquired whether the annual income of £35,000, which had been settled on the princess, had ceased, and whether the same or any other provision would be made for her. Castlereagh's reply was satisfactory; and the subject, for the moment, was allowed to drop. But on the following Monday it was again revived. Hume drew attention to the queen's position; and Tierney, in an elaborate but injudicious speech, insisted that the Ministry was bound either to treat her as innocent or to institute an inquiry into her conduct. He for one would not vote her one shilling of the public money unless she was recognised as Queen. Brougham, on the contrary, affected to regard the omission of the queen's name from the Liturgy, and her subsequent treatment, as "trifles, light as air."[2] The grant of a definite income still seemed to him the best thing for the king, the queen, and the country.

Before the question was again brought before the House of Commons its aspect was entirely changed. Almost at the time when the House of Commons was considering her situation the queen was entering Rome. She had seen an announcement in the newspaper of the death of George III., and she demanded, as Queen of England, that a guard of honour should be stationed at the door of her palace. Cardinal Gonsalvi, the Pope's Minister, replied that the Papal

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 34.

[2] It is singular that the quotation should not have taught him the importance of "trifles."

"Trifles, light as air,
Are, to the jealous, confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ."

Government had received no intelligence from the King of England or his ministers that the Queen of England was in Rome; and that the guard could not, therefore, be granted. The queen was seriously annoyed: her annoyance was probably increased by the news that her name had been omitted from the Liturgy. She, however, allowed a clear fortnight to elapse before taking any decisive step in the matter. On the 16th of March she wrote from Rome to Lord Liverpool a curious letter:—

The Queen's annoyance.

"The Queen of this Relams wishes to be informed through the medium of Lord Liverpool, First Minister to the King of this Relams, for which reason or motife the Queen name has been left out of the general Prayer-books in England, and especially to prevent all her subjects to pay her such respect which is due to the Queen. It is equally a great omittance towards the King that his Consort Queen should be obliged to soummit to such great neglect, or rather araisin from a perfect ignorance of the Archbishops of the real existence of the Queen Caroline of England.

"The Queen is also very anxious that Lord Liverpool should communicate this letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"Lord Liverpool will be not able to believe, I am sure of it, how much the Queen was surprised of this first act of cruel Tyranne towards her, as she had been informed through the newspapers of the 22nd of February, that in the course of the Debbet in the House of Common on that evening, Lord Castlereagh, one of the best friends of Lord Liverpool, assured the Attorney-General to the Queen Caroline, Mr. Brougham, that the King's servants would not omitte any attentions or use any harrsness towards the Queen, and after that speech of Lord Castlereagh to find her name left out of the Common prayer book as if she was no longer for this world.

"The Queen trusts that before she arrives in London to receive satisfactory answer from Lord Liverpool.

"CAROLINE QUEEN."[1]

[1] Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 46. The *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 131, publishes the letter; but the editor has turned it into English!

By the same post by which this letter was forwarded to Liverpool the queen sent a longer letter, explanatory of her motives, which appeared in the London newspapers; and, at the same time, she sent warrants appointing Brougham and Denman her Attorney and Solicitor-General. Denman. Thomas Denman, who thus became associated with Brougham as adviser to the queen, was admirably adapted for the position which he was called on to fill. Born in 1779, he was, at this period of his career, forty-one years of age. The son of a physician in respectable practice, he had received an excellent education at Eton and Cambridge. Adopting the law as his profession, he had gradually, though steadily, achieved considerable distinction at the Bar. His professional success had two years before led to his introduction into Parliament as member for Wareham; while his growing reputation had subsequently commended him to the electors of Nottingham, one of the largest and most Radical of English constituencies. Denman had been retained for the defence of Lord Cochrane in 1815; he had displayed conspicuous ability in the defence of the Luddite prisoners in 1817; he had spoken against the increased allowance to the Duke of York; he had resisted the Six Acts, and he had demanded an inquiry into the Peterloo Massacre. He had thus made his reputation by a succession of attacks on the Ministry and the Court. His opposition, both to the one and the other, qualified him to be the champion of the queen. A commanding presence and an admirable voice gave him dignity as a speaker. The purity of his life and the excellent example which he afforded, as a son, a father, and a husband, assisted to promote the cause of the queen. Men who were satisfied of her guilt while Brougham was her only adviser hesitated to condemn her when they learned that Denman also was her advocate.

Denman formed a strong opinion that it would be desirable that the queen should come to England. Brougham, who knew much more of her case than Denman, anticipated consequences from her coming "injurious, nay, perhaps ruinous

to her interests," and was ready to do his best to stop her.[1] He had written to the queen in February with this object; he had frequent interviews with Lord Liverpool on the subject; he arranged with the Ministry that £50,000 a year should be settled on her for life, on condition of her never coming into any part of the British dominions; of her taking some other name or title than that of Queen of England; and of abstaining from the exercise of any of the rights or privileges of queen, except such as related to the appointment of law officers;[2] and he offered to meet her at any convenient place (such as Brussels or Lille) and endeavour to arrange the matter. It is possible that, if Brougham had been the queen's sole adviser, his interference at the eleventh hour would have induced her to put off her journey. About this time, however, the queen began to lean on a different counsellor. Matthew Wood, alderman and ex-Lord Mayor of London, was a very remarkable personage. "That vain, foolish busybody, Mr. Alderman Wood, citizen and fishmonger:" so H. Legge described him to Lord Colchester. "Wood, the ass and alderman, whom they call Thistle Wood,"[3] wrote Brougham to Lord Hutchinson. "The queen had occasionally dealt with him as a linendraper," sneered Lord Liverpool's biographer. "That beast Wood" was George IV.'s description of him. Brougham made the House of Commons on one occasion laugh by suggesting that the initials A. W. (Alderman Wood) might stand also for "absolute wisdom." "Absolute Wisdom" became thenceforward a popular nickname of the alderman.[4] Few men, then, were ever more violently attacked than Alderman Wood. Yet, not-

Alderman Wood.

[1] Arnould's *Life of Denman*, vol. i. p. 143. Lord Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 49.

[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 53.

[3] Alderman Wood took the indecent and almost incredible course of seeking an interview with Thistlewood on his way to execution, and asking him the particulars of his connection with Edwards, the informer. On the day after Thistlewood's execution—viz., on the 2nd of May, and again in the following week—the alderman brought Edwards's conduct before the House of Commons. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 34, 36.

[4] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 121. Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 51. Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 145. Ibid., p. 139.

withstanding the abuse of his contemporaries, the alderman had considerable capacity. Denman, who knew him well, and who was a much fairer judge than Brougham, declared that he possessed "uncommon perseverance and activity, no small share of natural sagacity, and much acquaintance with the character of the English people."[1] The history of England during 1820 sufficiently refutes Brougham's attacks on the alderman's sagacity. If Brougham understood much more clearly than the alderman the nature of the queen's case, the alderman realised much more fully than Brougham the measure of popular support which she was certain to receive.

Wood seems to have placed himself in communication with the queen towards the end of March or the beginning of April. On the 15th of April 1820, she wrote to him from her villa at Pesaro: "I am in great heaste leving this place in an hour's time. . . . The 30th April I shall be at Calais for certain." But her movements were less rapid than she had promised to make them. She lingered for some days at Milan, and only reached Geneva on the 9th of May, nine days after she should have been at Calais. From Geneva she journeyed to Dijon; from Dijon to Montbard, where she was joined by Alderman Wood and Lady Anne Hamilton, a sister of the Duke of Hamilton. From Montbard she immediately proceeded to Villeneuve le Roi, which she reached on the 29th of May. Thence she wrote to Lord Liverpool desiring that a royal yacht might be placed at her disposal for the passage of the Channel; and to Brougham begging him to meet her at St. Omer. She arrived at St. Omer on Tuesday, the 30th of May.

The Queen sets out for England.

The crisis had arrived. The queen was within a few hours sail of the coast of England. The temporising policy of the Government had brought it face to face with a catastrophe which a few wise concessions might in all probability have averted. Hardly a hope remained that the queen, having come so far, would not come further; yet the Cabinet clung

[1] Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 139. Cf. Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 51.

like drowning men to the slender hope which still sustained them. Brougham was asked to go to St. Omer in the double capacity of adviser to the queen and semi-official representative of the Ministry. Lord Hutchinson was directed to accompany him. Brougham was instructed to lay before the queen the agreement which he had already made with Lord Liverpool, for the grant to her of an annuity of £50,000, on condition of her residing abroad, under some other title than that of Queen of England. Lord Hutchinson, singularly enough, was not provided with any formal instructions, though he was generally acquainted with the views of the King and of the Ministry. These terms, as Lord Hutchinson understood them, seem to have been even less liberal than those which had been agreed upon between Brougham and Liverpool. The queen was not merely to be debarred from taking the title of Queen, she was to refrain from using any title attached to the royal family of England.

Brougham and Lord Hutchinson depart to meet her.

Brougham and Hutchinson reached St. Omer on Saturday, the 3rd of June. They found the queen surrounded by her Italian attendants; they learned that passports had already been obtained for her suite, and that she had determined to start for England the next day. She was with difficulty persuaded to delay her journey for a few hours. She complained bitterly to Brougham of the indignities which she had received abroad. One minister had styled her Caroline of Brunswick, another Caroline of England; and her complaints on these heads were so long and so loud that Brougham did not venture to present to her the draft agreement which he had all the time in his pocket. On the Sunday, Brougham persuaded her to receive the proposition which it was understood that Lord Hutchinson was to make. Lord Hutchinson, not having it "in any specific form of words," begged for some little delay to enable him to look over his papers. The queen gave him three hours; read his proposal; and rejected his terms in five minutes. Brougham, by her command, retired to write to Lord Hutchinson. The queen withdrew, ordered

her carriage, and, with Alderman Wood, Lady Anne Hamilton, and William Austin, drove off to Calais. "Trifles, light as air," for which it was not worth while contending, had terminated the negotiations and precipitated the crisis.[1]

The queen reached Calais at half-past eleven on Sunday night. At Calais she received a strong remonstrance from Brougham, who was sincerely anxious to dissuade her from her journey. But she was already on board the packet; her mind was fully made up; and at six the following morning the packet worked its way out of Calais harbour. A few hours' passage brought the boat to Dover; and, at one o'clock on Monday, the 5th of June, the queen landed in England. The Commandant, who had received no special instructions, followed the ordinary course and fired a royal salute. An immense multitude assembled and cheered her. The inhabitants presented her with an address, congratulating her on her accession to the throne; and she expressed, in a dexterous reply, "her hope that she should be permitted to promote the happiness of her husband's subjects." But the queen had come to act, not to bandy compliments. On the evening of the same day she left Dover and reached Canterbury. It was already dark when she arrived at the cathedral city. But a hundred flambeaux showed to her the immense crowd assembled to receive her. The horses were removed from her carriage, and the queen was drawn by the people to the door of her hotel. The Mayor and Corporation, in their robes of office, waited on her with an address; and the queen, still more confident than at Dover, promised in her reply to do "anything to make *my* people happy."

The Queen arrives in England.

The queen rose at an early hour on the following morning. The weather was unpropitious; but the rain did not deter her Majesty from resuming her journey, or the crowds from thronging to welcome her. Her journey from Canterbury to London was one long triumphal procession. She left Canterbury at half-past ten in the morning,

Her progress to London.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 133, 135. Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. pp. 63–69. Brougham's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. pp. 356–366.

the people not allowing the horses to be put to the carriage, but drawing her out of the town. The officers of the cavalry regiment stationed at Canterbury escorted her as far as Sittingbourne. The clergy, in their gowns and bands, showed their indifference to the rumours of her Majesty's conduct by waiting on her at Sittingbourne. But the respect which was shown to her by the Army and the Church formed the least gratifying portion of the remarkable reception. At every village through which she passed all business was suspended, and the bells of every parish church rang out a merry peal of welcome. The entire nation seemed animated by one universal enthusiasm in her cause. Chatham, Rochester, and Strood poured forth their tens of thousands to do honour to their queen. At Gravesend she was again drawn by the people from one end of the town to the other. Hundreds of vehicles swelled the procession as it reached the metropolis. "Deptford and Greenwich poured out in indiscriminate concourse all ranks and conditions of their inhabitants; Blackheath resembled some great Continental fair. All classes of the people, men and women, old and young, grave and gay, shared in the universal enthusiasm.

The queen, overcome with the fatigue and excitement of her journey, rested for twenty minutes at this point before she resumed her approach to the capital. The weather improved as she reached the metropolis. Her carriage was thrown open; and, amidst the acclamations of a countless multitude, swelling into a louder and louder strain, the journey was resumed. The queen's equipage was mean and miserable. The carriage in which she sat was shabby. "That beast Wood," alderman and fishmonger, sat by her side. Lady Anne Hamilton, sister to the duke, occupied the opposite seat. Six or seven carriages, filled with the queen's suite, followed her own. The queen was in mourning for the late king, and bowed her acknowledgments to the multitude which was welcoming her. The vast throng, forming one compact mass, rolled over Westminster Bridge, through Parliament Street and Whitehall, to Pall Mall. As the queen's carriage passed Carlton House, the king's residence, Alderman Wood

stood up and gave three cheers. The sentries at the gates, following the example of the Commandant at Dover, presented arms. The cavalcade rolled on up St. James's Street till it reached the residence of Alderman Wood, in South Audley Street, where the queen alighted. The multitude did not disperse till her Majesty had bowed her acknowledgments from the balcony.

The enthusiasm with which the queen was greeted has probably had no parallel in the history of England; yet it was due to very simple causes, and affords a striking testimony to Alderman Wood's sagacity. It was attributable to two motives which have a strong influence on the English character: an admiration of courage and a hatred of oppression. Up to the date of her Majesty's landing at Dover one of these motives alone had influenced the people. They thought her oppressed, and they gave her their sympathy; but they were ignorant of her courage, and they withheld from her their admiration. She landed, and, in the words of a contemporary chronicler, "the calm was changed into a storm." "Journals which, on the Monday, would only grant her a few lines, and those expressed with the utmost caution, now sounded the trumpet of alarm throughout the land, and called on the friends of innocence to avenge the past insults of their queen, and to protect her against them for time to come." The calmest and gravest intellects caught the general infection. "If her father had advanced to Paris," wrote Ward, "as fearlessly as she advanced to London, we might have been spared five and twenty years' war." "She approaches wisely, because boldly," wrote Wilberforce, on the eve of her entry into the metropolis; "how deeply interested all are—indeed, I feel it myself—about her! One can't help admiring her spirit, though I fear she has been very profligate."

The immediate causes of her popularity.

Yet, though every one admired her courage and sympathised with her in her misfortunes, few, if any, believed in her innocence. Brougham, on the morning after her arrival, disclosed for the first time all his apprehensions to Denman, and finished a long series of awkward statements by saying, "So

now we are in for it, Mr. Denman!" The Whigs espoused the queen's cause; but the Whig ladies did not call upon her.[1] Mrs. Denman was extremely anxious to do so, but Denman begged her to wait till Mrs. Brougham had left her name, "dreading that such scenes of vice and debauchery would be proved as would overwhelm with shame any woman who had formed any acquaintance with the criminal." The mob thoroughly shared this feeling. Brougham has recorded that they called for "three cheers for Mr. Austin, the queen's son," thereby assuming her to have been convicted of the high treason of which she had been acquitted in 1806. The strength of the queen's cause lay "in the general demurrer which all men, in and out of Parliament, made—namely, that, admit everything true which is alleged against the queen, after the treatment she had received ever since she came to England, her husband had no right to the relief prayed by him, and the punishment he sought against her."[2]

Action of the Ministry.

Lord Hutchinson and Brougham had been left by the queen at St. Omer; the one disappointed at the failure of his mission, the other vexed at the rejection of his advice. "I suppose she will have Wood for her Attorney-General," he wrote in the first flush of his annoyance to Denman. But his irritation induced him to quicken his movements. He lost no time in leaving St. Omer. He travelled rapidly to London, and reached the metropolis before the queen. The moment was critical. The news of the queen's intentions had reached London on the evening of the day on which she had left St. Omer. A Cabinet Council had been hastily sum-

[1] So say Denman (vol. i. p. 149) and Bootle Wilbraham, in Colchester, vol. iii. p. 142. The latter, however, excepts Lady Tavistock. He might also have excepted the Dowager Lady Lansdowne, Lady Harrington, and Mrs. Damer. —*Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 219.

[2] Brougham, vol. ii. pp. 365, 366; *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 140; Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 149; Wilberforce Memoirs, vol. v. p. 55; Ward's correspondence with the Bishop of Llandaff, p. 255. The three cheers for "Mr. Austin, the queen s son,' remind the modern reader of the illogical remark of one of the Tichborne mob: "D' you think that I'll see *Arthur* deprived of his rights?" Sir John Karslake told the Author that this question was actually proposed to him by one of the Tichborne mob.

moned, and had sat late into the night. The ministers had reassembled at ten o'clock on the following morning, and had prolonged their sitting till half-past twelve. Parliament met at two. Immediately after the conclusion of some formal business Liverpool brought down to the House of Lords certain papers, sealed up in a green bag, respecting the conduct of the queen since her departure from the kingdom, and gave notice that he would refer the papers to a secret committee on the morrow. A similar green bag, similarly sealed, and accompanied with a similar message, was carried to the House of Commons by Castlereagh. On the following Sunday a clergyman of the Church of England, with more humour than reverence, took for his text the verse in Job: "My transgression is sealed up in a bag."[1] On the 6th of June, after a short discussion, the House of Lords referred the papers which Liverpool had brought down to it to a secret committee. In the Commons, Brougham anticipated the motion, which it was understood that Castlereagh would propose, by presenting a message from the queen deprecating a private inquiry, and demanding an open investigation into her conduct. The communication was received with cheers, but it in no way altered the conduct of the Government. Castlereagh immediately rose to move for the appointment of a secret committee. Brougham followed Castlereagh, entered at great length into the whole of the queen's case, and concluded by deprecating the appointment of the committee. The speech was unexpected, and its effect was magical. Canning, who had been the intimate friend of the queen in previous years, and who still retained a lively remembrance of her fascinating manners, defended the Ministry for the steps which had already been taken, but solemnly announced his resolution never to place himself in the position of her accuser. Wilberforce, whose influence, whose character, and whose ability admirably adapted him for the office of mediator,

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1280, Chron., pp. 144, 217. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. pp. 870, 905–985. Job xiv. 17.

proposed an adjournment of a few days, in order that some compromise might be arranged through the instrumentality of common friends. The country gentlemen, seriously alarmed by Brougham, rose one after another in support of Wilberforce's proposal, and an adjournment of three days was, in the language of one of them, "carried almost by acclamation."[1]

Attempts at compromise.

Wilberforce had gained the country three days of grace; but neither the king nor the queen seemed likely to make any use of them. The enthusiasm of the mob was daily increasing. Placards were posted throughout the town commanding a great illumination for three nights. The mob cheered those who complied with their demands; and broke the windows of those who disobeyed them. The excitement among the populace extended to the army. One of the battalions of Guards, displaying symptoms of disaffection, was marched out of the metropolis; and the whole kingdom seemed threatened with revolution and division. Wednesday and Thursday passed by. The queen made no advance towards a compromise; the king was sullenly determined to make none. Late on the Friday afternoon, on the eve of the meeting of the House, the queen's reluctance yielded to the importunity of her advisers, and she deigned to make an overture to Liverpool. "She had directed," she commanded Brougham to say, "her most serious attention to the declared sense of Parliament as to the propriety of some amicable adjustment of existing differences; and, submitting to that high authority with the gratitude due to the protection she has always received from it, her Majesty no longer waits for a communication from the ministers of the crown, but commands Mr. Brougham to announce her own readiness to consider any arrangement that can be suggested consistent with her dignity and honour."

The Ministry, on the receipt of this letter, adjourned the House for a further period of three days, to enable some

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 146–153. Denman, vol. i. p. 148. Brougham vol. ii. p. 367. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 142.

arrangement to be made. Liverpool, in the meanwhile, briefly referred the queen to the memorandum already delivered by him to Brougham; but offered to receive any suggestions which her Majesty or her advisers might have to offer on the proposition. The queen desired Brougham to reply that the memorandum appeared to have been superseded by Lord Hutchinson's later proposition; that she now saw it for the first time; that she did not "consider it consistent with her dignity and honour;" and that "the recognition of her rank and privileges as queen must be the basis of any arrangement which can be made." Liverpool thereupon declared that, though "the memorandum proposed that her Majesty should abstain from the exercise of the rights and privileges of queen, with certain exceptions," it "did not call upon her to renounce any of them. Whatever appertains to her Majesty as queen must continue to appertain to her so long as it is not abrogated by law." The Ministry was now willing to receive any proposition for an adjustment which her Majesty's advisers might make, provided that it had "for its basis her Majesty's residence abroad." The queen consented to negotiate on this basis, and proposed that the matters in dispute should be referred to some person or persons of high station and character; and the protracted correspondence resulted in the appointment of Wellington and Castlereagh on one side, and of Fitzwilliam and Sefton on the other, to arbitrate between the king and queen.

The arbitrators met at Fitzwilliam's house in Grosvenor Square. They all thought it necessary to attend in Court dress; but they did not think it necessary to be particular as to time. Wellington, with his usual good sense, saw that Fitzwilliam and Sefton were merely puppets in Brougham's hands, and declared that the affair could never go on unless they were replaced by the queen's natural advisers, Brougham and Denman. The Duke's proposal was agreed to, and the conference was adjourned to Castlereagh's house in St. James's Square. Castlereagh was "covered with stars, diamonds, and

ribands; Wellington was equally splendid." Brougham and Denman were in plain clothes. Five separate conferences were held on five successive days, and five elaborate protocols were drawn up. But the conferences proved as abortive as any sober person might from the first have foreseen that they would be. "It was plain from the first" that the Duke and Castlereagh "had nothing like full powers from the king." Brougham himself admitted that he and Denman had not full powers from the queen. Fettered in their action, there is no wonder that the negotiators should have failed; the only cause for surprise is that men should have consented to negotiate on such terms.

At the first conference Brougham dexterously raised the point on which the negotiation was ultimately broken off. "Speaking of some expedient to reconcile her Majesty to a stipulation that she should reside on the Continent, to which he merely said that she had no insuperable objection, he suggested in a sort of hurried whisper that the restoration of her name to the Liturgy might answer that purpose. Castlereagh promptly replied, 'You might as easily move Carlton House.'" And with this answer the conference might, in reality, have broken up. But the negotiators went on negotiating for four days more. In the course of the negotiation the concessions made by the king were various and great. "The name and rights of a queen were granted to her Majesty without reserve. A royal yacht, a frigate, &c., were offered 'for her journey.' It was agreed that her name and rank should be notified either at Rome or Milan, the capitals in which she had expressed her intention to reside; and that an address should be presented to the queen, as well as another to the king, to 'thank her Majesty for having acceded to the wish of the House of Commons.'"[1] These concessions, if they had been made ten days sooner, would probably have prevented the queen's journey to England. If they had been accompanied by the graceful insertion of the queen's name in the

[1] Wilberforce, vol. v. p. 56. Cf. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 158-167 Brougham, vol. ii. p. 375. Denman, vol. i. p. 154.

Liturgy, they would have satisfied all parties, and averted the scandal, which was daily coming nearer. The Ministry, however, took its stand on "trifles light as air." Never had the danger of civil war been risked for so trivial an object.

Parliament, in the meanwhile, had held its hand, anxiously awaiting the result of the negotiation. On Monday, the 19th of June, the Ministry had the mortification to announce in both Houses that the negotiation had failed. On the following day, Wilberforce, who had already acted as peace-maker, rose to announce his intention of making a motion on the subject. No one knew what his intended motion was; wrapping himself up in mystery, he declined to disclose its terms, and both parties were obliged to wait for its disclosure. Wilberforce really desired the restoration of the queen's name to the Liturgy. But he refrained from moving an address to the king with this object. The king, it was certain, would not yield; and, if the king would not yield, the only chance of an arrangement depended on the queen's giving way. Wilberforce saw the difficulty which prevented the queen from surrendering her claim. But he adroitly concluded that, though the queen could not yield her claim to the king, she might waive it at the request of the House of Commons. With this view he drew up an address to be presented to the queen. He found a seconder in Stuart Wortley, the great Yorkshire magnate, who had succeeded him in the representation of the Northern county, and whose vast possessions ultimately won a barony for himself and an earldom for his grandson. The proposal led to a remarkable debate. In the course of it Denman used the memorable words which made so great an impression on the House and the country. It had been suggested that, "though all particular mention of the queen's name was omitted from the Liturgy, she might yet be considered as being comprised in the general prayer for the royal family." "If her Majesty," he replied, "was included in any general prayer, it was in the prayer for all who are desolate and oppressed."

Failure of the negotiation.

Wilberforce's motion was carried by 391 votes to 124.[1] Stuart Wortley, Sir Thomas Acland, and he were deputed to carry it on the following Saturday to the queen. It was doubtful what the queen would do. "She will accede to your address, I pledge myself," Brougham had written to Wilberforce. Her counsel unanimously declined to offer her any advice on the subject. An immense mob, collected before her door, anxiously awaited her decision, and amused themselves in the interim by hooting Wilberforce and his fellow-peacemakers. For a few minutes the result was uncertain. The queen then announced to her advisers her solemn determination to reject Wilberforce's proposition. The form of the answer, which she had herself prepared, was hurriedly corrected by Brougham and Denman. The deputation was called in, and received the queen's reply. Her decision was greeted with enthusiastic cheering by the mob which surrounded her door.

Subsequent failure of Wilberforce.

The baffled mediators had nothing left to do but to announce the failure of their mission. Their failure left Ministers no alternative but to proceed against the queen. They had committed themselves to the demands of the king so far that they could not, now that there was no longer a chance of an arrangement, avoid going farther. Another scene in the strange drama had concluded, and a new one was about to begin. Two days after the failure of the mediation, the queen presented a petition to the House of Lords protesting against the institution of a secret inquiry into her conduct. On the motion of Lord Dacre counsel were called in, and heard in support of her prayer. Brougham and Denman contended that all the proceedings should be delayed till after the arrival of the witnesses for the queen. Until these "witnesses arrived they could not become sufficiently acquainted with the habits and character of the witnesses against their illustrious client to cross-examine them to any useful purpose." Denman, in the course of his speech, referred to the process by which the evidence against the queen had been collected; and

First proceedings in the House of Lords.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. pp. 1185, 1270, 1314.

applied to Leach, who notoriously desired the Chancellorship, Emilia's description of "Iago"—

> "I will be hanged, if some eternal villain,
> Some busy and insinuating rogue,
> Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
> Have not devised this slander."

Eldon was delighted with this attack upon Leach, and the public was equally amused at it. Two months after the speech in the Lords, "Othello" was played at Drury Lane, and the passage was received with raptures of applause. In Emilia's succeeding speech—

> "Why should he call her whore? who keeps her company?
> What place? what time? what form? what likelihood?
> The Moor's abus'd by some most villanous knave,
> Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.
> O heaven, that such companions thou'dst unfold;
> And put in every honest hand a whip,
> To lash the rascals naked through the world,
> Even from the east to the west!"—

the applause was redoubled. "The pit twice stood up and cheered; the men waved their hats, the women their handkerchiefs; and the acclamations throughout the whole house were loud and general, and lasted for several minutes."[1]

Popular demonstrations of this character ought to have warned the Government of the folly of the course which it was pursuing. But nothing could turn the king from his violent resolution to degrade his wife; and the Ministry had not the courage to withstand the sovereign. Brougham and Denman's application was rejected; the "green bag" was referred to a secret committee; and the committee, on the 4th of July, reported that the charges deeply "affect not only the honour of the queen, but also the dignity of the Crown and the moral feeling and honour of the country. In their opinion it is indispensable that they should become the subject of a solemn inquiry, which it appears to the committee may be best effected in the course of a legislative proceeding." On the following day Liverpool introduced a bill "to deprive

The secret committee's report.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 392; *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. pp. 1323–1338.

her Majesty Queen Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of the title, prerogative rights, privileges, and exemptions of Queen Consort of this realm, and to dissolve the marriage between his Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth."[1] The bill was immediately read a first time, and the second reading fixed for the 17th of August.

The feeling of the populace and the reception of the witnesses.

The strength of the popular feeling in the queen's favour became every day more marked. Addresses poured in upon her Majesty from all classes of the British people. The Common Council of the City of London formally petitioned both Houses of Parliament to give up the bill. One of the members of the Council insisted, amidst rapturous applause, that there should be "no royal way of evading the obligations of married life." When the queen took a drive in the Park the people removed the horses from her carriage and drew it themselves. When the Princess Elizabeth's carriage met the queen's the mob peremptorily commanded the princess's servants to uncover. But the strength of the popular feeling was not thoroughly seen till after the arrival of the witnesses against the queen. The first batch of these unhappy men landed at Dover on the 7th of July. The people set upon them, "beat them unmercifully, venting all the while the deepest execrations against them." They were removed by stealth to London, and lodged during the trial in some temporary buildings in Cotton Yard. Cotton Yard, long since swept away, was in the immediate neighbourhood of the Houses of Parliament. The only direct communication which it had with the street was effectually closed by strong doors bound with iron. Ingress from the river side of Parliament Stairs was as effectually barred by a brick wall and a strong timber partition. And a new causeway, also closely fortified, projecting to low water mark, formed the only means of communication between the outer world and the imprisoned witnesses.[2]

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. ii. pp. 168, 211, where the Bill of Pains and Penalties will be found.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., pp. 244, 255, 305.

If precautions were necessary to defend the witnesses against the queen from the violence of the mob, still greater precautions were requisite to avert a popular disturbance on the 17th of August. It was certain that a vast crowd would be collected to witness the commencement of the proceedings; it was possible that violence might be attempted by the populace. Troops were consequently quietly pushed forward towards the metropolis; a large body of artillery was moved up from Woolwich; the Surrey Horse Patrol was quartered in the livery stables opposite Astley's Theatre, in the Westminster Bridge Road; special constables were sworn in to keep the approach to the House of Lords; and two barriers, consisting of massive pieces of timber, were stretched across New Palace Yard from St. Margaret's Church to the King's Bench Record Office. On the morning of the 17th the whole line of the Westminster Road was patrolled by the City Light Horse. The Horse Police occupied Parliament Street and Whitehall; two regiments of Life Guards were stationed in Palace Yard, and the Coldstreams were marched into Westminster Hall, where a powerful train of field-pieces was stationed. But the imposing display of military force was lost in the vast crowd by which the streets were thronged. From St. James's Square, where her Majesty had slept on the previous evening, through Pall Mall, Charing Cross, Whitehall, Parliament Street, and Palace Yard the crowd formed one uniform, compact, and unbroken body. The windows and roofs of the houses which lined the route were thronged by anxious, sympathising spectators.

The Queen's reception on the 17th of August.

The people, however, were not riotous. They hooted the Duke of Wellington; they cheered the Duke of Sussex; they called on the Guards to remember their queen: but they attempted no hostile demonstration; they inflicted no injury on any one. From eight o'clock in the morning till ten the vast crowd continued to increase. A little before ten a universal cheer announced that the queen had left her house. Her Majesty, who was in an open carriage, drawn by six horses, and who was attended by Lady Anne Hamilton, proceeded

slowly through the people. The sentinels at Carlton House presented arms to her, and were cheered for doing so. The shouts, which greeted her throughout her progress, were said by one who was present to be the loudest he had ever heard. The living mass which surrounded her Majesty's carriage thronged after it as it rolled slowly away. The strong barriers at St. Margaret's Church snapped in an instant before the irresistible pressure of the crowd. The mechanical contrivances which the Government had prepared proved inadequate for the occasion. Nothing but the good humour of the multitude averted a more serious catastrophe than the rupture of a wooden barrier.

Scene in the Lords.

The scene which was presented inside the House throughout the trial was of the most imposing character. Two galleries, each containing two rows of seats, had been temporarily constructed on either side of the chamber for the accommodation of the peers who should be unable to find room in the House itself. In the body of the House two-thirds of the space usually allotted to strangers were assigned to the counsel, the solicitors, and the witnesses engaged or called on either side. The queen herself occupied the seat immediately adjoining the bar which was usually allotted to the bishop who was not a peer—the Bishop of Sodor and Man. A chair of state, covered with crimson velvet, and adorned with gilt mouldings, was placed there for her accommodation. She was dressed in black, but a rich white lace veil "flowed gracefully over her shoulders and hung like an antique vestment over her dress." Her chair faced the throne, the woolsack, the table, the peers, and, it may be added, the members of the other House of Parliament, who were accommodated with places in the space adjoining the throne. Rarely before had so memorable an assemblage been collected in so comparatively small a space, and rarely before had so momentous an investigation been entrusted to so unsatisfactory a tribunal. For if, on the one hand, there sate in that solemn judgment chamber many men whose minds were still open to conviction, there were collected in it, on the other hand, some men whose birth, whose position, whose rewards, and whose expectations, made

it hopeless to expect that they would be free from bias. For there sate the king's brothers, one of them busily whispering in the ears of his brother peers the basest insinuations against the character of his sister-in-law. There sate the king's ministers, who had yielded to their master's orders, and who were bound to defend the cause which they had adopted against their own judgment, and the promptings of their own conscience. There sate that ministry's supporters, some of them ready at the call of party to sacrifice greater things than a woman's character. There too were peers who owed their titles to the king, peers who were expecting further honours from him, peers who held emoluments at his will and pleasure, peers who were hoping for fresh favours from their sovereign—met together, at the will of their king, to pronounce judgment on the honour and character of their queen.[1]

The spectators instinctively turned their eyes to the judges. Posterity perhaps feels as great an interest in the plain knot of lawyers behind the bar. There, on one side, stood the Attorney-General, Sir Robert Gifford; the Solicitor-General, Sir John Copley; the king's Advocate-General, Sir Christopher Robinson; Dr. Adams, a civilian; and Mr. Parke, an "outer barrister." There, on the other side, stood Brougham, Denman, Lushington, Williams, Tindal, and Wilde. The prizes of the profession seemed at the feet of the fortunate lawyers who were retained on the king's side. Everything that the Court could do to retard the promotion of the advisers of the queen was certain to be done. Yet the counsel for the queen attained on the whole higher positions, both in their profession and in the State, than those for the king. On the king's side Sir John Copley became Lord Chancellor; Gifford became Master of the Rolls and a peer; Parke a judge of the King's Bench, a baron of the Exchequer, and Lord Wensleydale. On the queen's side Brougham, the leader, became Chancellor; Wilde, the junior, rose also to the Chancellorship; Denman became Chief Justice of the King's Bench, Tindal Chief Justice of the Common

The counsel.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Chron., pp. 62, 366, 376, 381.

Pleas, Lushington a judge of the High Court of Admiralty, and Williams a justice of the Queen's Bench. Rarely had any client been defended by counsel destined for such distinction as those who were retained for the queen.

The trial.

The trial—for such it really was—was delayed at the outset. Lord Carnarvon had the address to elicit a formal opinion from the judges that the queen, even if she were guilty of adultery with a foreigner, had not committed high treason within the meaning of the Act of Edward III.[1] On the motion of Lord Kenyon the queen's counsel were heard against the principle of the bill; and the 17th, 18th, and 19th of August were mainly occupied with the speeches of Brougham and Denman on the one side, and with the replies of the Attorney and Solicitor-General on the other. On the 19th of August the Attorney-General opened the case for the Crown, and on the next day the examination of the witnesses began.

The first witness for the bill was one Theodore Majocchi. Majocchi had been a fellow-servant of Bergami's in Marshal Pino's service; and he had been subsequently engaged by Bergami as valet to the queen. He had lived in her Majesty's service throughout her stay in Italy; he had accompanied her in her voyage to the East, and he had necessarily had many opportunities of closely observing her conduct. When Majocchi was called the queen rose in manifest agitation, exclaiming, "Teodoro, no! no!" or "Traditore, no! no!" and hurried from the House. Her Majesty's evident agitation naturally created a profound impression, which was increased as Majocchi's examination proceeded. His statements were clear; his memory accurate; and his story damaging. His examination was purposely protracted by Copley throughout the whole of the day, and the peers separated in the evening, profoundly impressed with the immorality of their queen. Brougham rose on the following morning to cross-examine the witness. A trivial question of little moment, purposely designed to test the accuracy of his memory, elicited the hesitating reply,

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. ii. p. 632.

"*Non mi ricordo*" (I do not remember). Brougham saw his advantage, and rapidly plied the witness with a series of questions, to the majority of which he received the same answer, "*Non mi ricordo; non mi ricordo.*" The witness's memory was effectually discredited by the process, and the expression "*Non mi ricordo*" passed into the by-word which it has ever since continued. When the queen, in the following month, made an excursion by water from her house at Hammersmith to Greenwich, the people, as her barge passed Westminster, raised the appropriate shout, "*Non mi ricordo.*" When Sir Walter Scott was attacked by the Duke of Clarence as to the authorship of the "Waverley Novels," he replied, "I must give your Royal Highness the favourite answer of the day, '*Non mi ricordo.*'"[1]

The examination of the witnesses against the queen lasted until the 7th of September. The Solicitor-General, Copley, summed up the evidence; and the House adjourned for three weeks, to enable the queen's counsel to prepare their reply. In the interval the popular sympathy for the queen continued to be loudly expressed. The sailors in the merchant service marched through the City with an address to her. Every important town presented their addresses of congratulation. That from Liverpool contained 30,000 signatures; and more than 11,000 women of Sheffield signed another. The mob judged every one by his declared opinions on the queen's case. Eldon, posting home to Dorsetshire, was mobbed at Ringwood. Denman, passing his holiday at Cheltenham, was drawn triumphantly into the town. It was a serious matter to reside in the neighbourhood of her Majesty. The ministry was induced to promise to purchase the queen a house, and a list of suitable residences was sent to her to select from. She chose one in Piccadilly; but she was informed that it could not be obtained. She selected another, in St. James's Square; but that was also declared unobtainable. She was offered a third, in Hamilton Place, and accepted the offer;

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 404. Brougham, vol. ii. p. 415. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. ii. p. 864.

but the house had already found another purchaser. The residences of the Duke of Gloucester, of Lord Castlereagh, and of Lord Eldon were respectively adjacent to these houses.[1]

The peers reassembled on the 3rd of October, and Brougham opened the case for the queen. His speech was "one of the most powerful orations that ever proceeded from human lips." Nothing has ever exceeded the magnificence of his peroration: "My lords, I pray you to pause. I do earnestly beseech you to take heed. You are standing upon the brink of a precipice: then beware! It will go forth your judgment, if sentence shall go against the queen. But it will be the only judgment you ever pronounced which, instead of reaching its object, will return and bound back against those who gave it. Save the country, my lords, from the horrors of this catastrophe; save yourselves from this peril; rescue the country, of which you are the ornaments, but in which you can flourish no longer, when severed from the people, than the blossom when cut off from the roots and the stem of the tree. Save that country, that you may continue to adorn it; save the crown, which is in jeopardy; the aristocracy, which is shaken; save the altar, which must stagger from the blow that rends the kindred throne. You have said, my lords, you have willed—the Church and the King have willed—that the Queen should be deprived of its solemn service. She has, instead of that solemnity, the heartfelt prayers of the people. She wants no prayers of mine. But I do here pour forth my humble supplications at the Throne of Mercy that that mercy may be poured down upon the people in a larger measure than the merits of their rulers may deserve, and that your hearts may be turned to justice." The effects of this magnificent peroration were prodigious. "His arguments, his observations, his tones, his attitude, his eye, left an impression on my mind," wrote Denman, "which is scarcely ever renewed

The defence.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., pp. 407, 414, 415, 423. Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 165. Eldon, vol. ii. pp. 385, 386. Lord Eldon threatened to resign the Chancellorship if the Hamilton Place house were bought.

without exciting the strongest emotion. Erskine rushed out of the House in tears."[1]

On the 5th of October the House proceeded to hear the queen's witnesses, and their examination was not concluded till the 24th. There can be very little question that the witnesses summoned for the queen enjoyed a higher social status than those who had been examined against her. The most material witnesses against her Majesty were Teodoro Majocchi, her Italian valet; and Louise Demont, a Swiss maid; Gargiulo, a captain, and Paturzo, a mate, in the Neapolitan mercantile marine; Barbara Kress, a waiting-maid at Carlsruhe; Raggazoni, an Italian mason; and Restelli, a superintendent of the stables. Majocchi's evidence was discredited by his "*Non mi ricordo.*" Demont, after having placed the most injurious construction on her mistress's character, was proved to have written her the most flattering letters, and to have used her utmost endeavours to obtain for a young sister a situation in her service. Raggazoni was proved to have been bribed by Restelli; and Restelli, after concluding his testimony, was sent out of the country; and it was proved that Powell, the solicitor for the bill, and a member of the Milan Commission, had sent him away.

Restelli's absence probably did more good to the queen's cause than any other circumstance. Her counsel had a right to remonstrate on the absence of an essential witness, whom, on every principle of justice, the king's advisers were bound to have retained in the country. Indirectly, too, Restelli's absence gave Brougham an opportunity for making a formidable attack on the king. Powell was called by the peers to account for Restelli's disappearance; and, after he had been examined by Grey, Carnarvon, and others, Brougham rose to cross-examine him. His first question, "Who is your employer or client in this case?" elicited shouts of "No! no!" from the peers. Brougham maintained, in an elaborate argument, the propriety of the question: "I have never been able

[1] Denman, vol. i. p. 169. For the peroration see Brougham, vol. ii. p. 399, and cf. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. iii. p. 210.

to trace the local habitation or the name of the unknown being who is the plaintiff in this proceeding. I know not but it may vanish into thin air—I know not under what shape it exists;" and he then proceeded to declaim with magnificent effect Milton's description of Death, in "Paradise Lost:"—

> "If shape it might be called, that shape had none
> Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
> Or substance might be called, that shadow seemed,
> For each seemed either. What seemed his head
> The likeness of a kingly crown had on." [1]

The queen's witnesses were, it has already been stated, of high position. Mr. St. Leger, Sir William Gell, and Mr. Keppel Craven, her chamberlains; Lady Charlotte Lindsay, her lady of the bedchamber; Dr. Holland, her physician, were witnesses of undeniable status, and contradicted or explained much of the most damaging evidence which had been produced against their mistress. Their testimony refuted the charges preferred against the queen's conduct during the whole of the time they were with her. Unfortunately, however, they all of them left the queen's service at an early period; and were unable to speak to the events which had happened on board the polacre, and in the course of the queen's journey to the East. For that part of her case she was compelled to rely on the evidence of Lieutenant Flinn—a witness who fainted on being pressed in his cross-examination—and Lieutenant Hownam, who made a damaging admission. The evidence of these two gentlemen, and especially of Lieutenant Hownam, did the queen more harm than all the testimony furnished by the other side.

The Queen's witnesses.

The examination of the witnesses was not concluded until the 24th of October. Late on that day Denman rose to sum

[1] The quotation was suggested to Brougham by Spencer Perceval, the eldest son of Perceval, the Prime Minister, then a young man of twenty-four years of age. Brougham, in his opening speech, on the 3rd October, had paid a very handsome compliment to the protection which the Princess of Wales had always derived from Perceval, "her firm, dauntless, and most able advocate." Young Perceval repaid the compliment by supplying a quotation, which has been connected ever since with the name of Brougham, and which George IV. felt more severely than, with one exception, any incident in the trial.—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. iii. p. 241. Greville's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 38.

up the evidence on behalf of the queen. His speech, which extended over two days, occupied ten hours. The advocate displayed his independence and earned the undying hostility of the king by comparing the queen to Octavia, the wife of Nero; and by quoting the retort which one of Octavia's maids returned to Tigellinus, who was presiding at her examination and torture. The retort implied an imputation which George IV., with all his faults, did not deserve, and which Denman, excited as he was, did not intend to make. The advocate further showed his independence by an uncompromising attack on the Duke of Clarence, who had been industriously circulating the most atrocious stories against the queen. "I know that rumours are abroad of the most vague but, at the same time, most injurious character. We have heard and hear daily with alarm that there are persons, and these not of the lowest condition, not even excluded from this august assembly, who are industriously circulating the most odious calumnies against her Majesty. Can this thing be? We know that if a juryman on such an occasion should affect to possess any knowledge on the subject of inquiry we should have a right to call him to the bar as a witness. 'Come forward,' we might say, 'and let us confront you with our evidence.' But to any man who could even be suspected of so base a practice as whispering calumnies to judges the queen might well exclaim, 'Come forth, thou slanderer, and let me see thy face! If thou wouldst equal the respectability of an Italian witness, come forth and depose in open court. As thou art thou art worse than an Italian assassin! because, while I am boldly and manfully meeting my accusers, thou art planting a dagger unseen in my bosom, and converting thy poisoned stiletto into the semblance of the sword of justice.'" It is said that Denman, while he made this attack, looked steadfastly at the part of the gallery in which the Duke of Clarence was seated, and that he raised his voice "till the old roof rang again, and a thrill of irrepressible emotion pervaded every heart in the densely crowded assembly." It is a striking illustration of the difference between the character of the two brothers that

Denman's speech.

the king never forgave Denman's imputation; while the Duke of Clarence generously forgot the advocate's attack on him.[1]

The conclusion of Denman's speech was less happy. "If your lordships have been furnished with powers which scarcely Omniscience possesses for coming at the secrets of this female, you will think that it is your duty to imitate the justice, beneficence, and wisdom of that benignant Being who, not in a case like this, where innocence is manifest, but when guilt was detected and vice revealed, said: 'If no one come forward to condemn thee, neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more.'" The conclusion was almost as faulty as the logic of the mob which gave three cheers for Mr. Austin, the queen's son. It suggested an admirable epigram to some wit:—

> "Most gracious Queen, we thee implore
> To go away, and sin no more;
> But, if that effort be too great,
> To go away, at any rate." [2]

Denman concluded his speech on the 25th of October. The remainder of the month was occupied with the arguments of Lushington, who followed him, and with the replies of the Attorney-General, Gifford, and of the Solicitor-General, Copley. The Attorney-General had been previously thought to have mismanaged the case; but his reply redeemed his credit and restored, by the power of his advocacy, a tottering cause. For four days, during the commencement of November, the peers proceeded to debate the propriety of assenting to the principle of the bill. The second reading was carried by 123 votes to 95. The majority was comparatively small. It made the fate of the bill doubtful; but it left no doubt as to the opinion which the peers had formed of the queen's guilt. It was said at the time that no peer who was not satisfied that the queen was guilty voted for the second reading; but that a great many peers who firmly believed in her guilt thought the measure inexpedient,

The bill passes its second reading.

[1] Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 177. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 1132. *Hansard*, vol. iii. pp. 1090, 1181.

[2] Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 172. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 1134. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 181.

and therefore voted against it. Lord Harewood, Lord Falmouth, Lord Calthorpe, Lord de Clifford, Lord Grantham, Lord Gosford, for example, all expressed themselves satisfied that the queen was guilty, but all of them voted against the second reading. Lord Ellenborough declared, amidst loud cheers, that the Queen of England was "the last woman in the country" whom "a man of honour would wish his wife to resemble;" but he declined to support the bill. The majority which the ministry secured was partly obtained by a promise that the divorce clause should be dropped.

The subsequent stages of the bill were rapidly passed through. The debate in committee, however, gave rise to some curious tactics. Liverpool had offered to drop the divorce clause; but the Opposition was anxious to deprive the ministry of the chance of conciliating its supporters, and consequently desired to retain the clause. Some of the ministerial party, moreover, ready to proceed against her Majesty to all extremes, were unwilling to omit a single penalty. For these reasons her Majesty's warmest friends and her hottest opponents were both agreed in retaining the clause, and they carried its retention against the ministry by a large majority. The effects of this policy were apparent on the division on the third reading. The opponents of the bill increased from 95 to 99; the supporters of the measure dwindled from 123 to 108. The queen hurriedly withdrew with Denman to prepare a petition to be heard by counsel against the bill passing, and her Majesty, in signing it, used the memorable words, "Regina in spite of them." But the vote had, in reality, been decisive of the fate of the measure. Liverpool saw the folly of attempting to proceed with so narrow a majority, and rose to propose that the further consideration of the bill be adjourned to that day six months. The House assented with pleasure to a motion which gave a term to proceedings which were distasteful to almost every peer.

The bill is abandoned.

The abandonment of the bill was hailed with exultation in the country. London was illuminated for three successive nights. Dublin, Edinburgh, and many of the chief towns

followed the example of the capital. The mail coaches arrived at Bath, men and horses covered with white favours. "The City of London passed a vote of thanks to Brougham, Denman, and Lushington, and resolved that the freedom of the City should be presented to them in commemoration of their splendid and successful exertions." The queen proceeded in state to St. Paul's to return thanks for her success. The Strand, Fleet Street, and Ludgate Hill were crowded with spectators; the neighbouring houses were thronged. As much as two guineas is said to have been given for a single seat at a window.[1] Her Majesty was received with enthusiasm which exceeded every previous demonstration. The visit to St. Paul's was, in fact, coincident with the period of her greatest popularity. The air was ringing with the acclamations of the mob; steadfast friends and scheming courtiers were pouring their congratulations upon her Majesty; deputations were honouring her with addresses; the people were welcoming her approach—and the queen, for the first time, was dejected and unhappy. She, who had dared kings, ministers, and lords; she, who had signed herself "Regina in spite of them;" she, who had listened day after day to the evidence, true and false, brought against her; she, whose courage had faced dangers and disclosures which would have scared away ninety-nine women out of every hundred, broke down under her triumph. "I do indeed feel thankful," she wrote, in the only affecting letter ever composed by her; "*mais hélas*, it comes too late. Her who would have rejoiced wid me at her moder's triumph is losset to me. . . . No one, in fact, care for me; and this business has been more cared for as a political affair, dan as de cause of a poor forlorn woman. . . . I feel very unwell, fatigued, and *ébayé:* I wonder my head is not quite bewildered wid all I have suffered—and it is not over yet wid me. . . . Many people call on me now who never did before. . . . I will not quarrel with their respect, though it is shown me rather late in de day, and when they cannot well help it."

The Queen's dejection.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., pp. 486, 500, 503. Wilberforce, vol. v. p. 80. Denman, vol. ii. p. 179, 180.

One woman had not, however, waited till "rather late in de day" to show her respect to her unhappy queen. Lady Anne Hamilton had been an old friend of her royal mistress; but she had been one of the least favoured among her mistress's suite. "She is so full of old maid's whims and prudery, it is quite tiresome to be under her surveillance." "Mein Gott, she is wearisome sometimes. Job would have got into a passion wid her, I am sure." "No hopes of getting the *dragonne* married; no one will venture to espouse Joan of Arc. Dey are all afraid of de Amazon, and I am not much surprised." So wrote the princess in 1814. But, in 1820, Lady Anne Hamilton was the only woman who stood firmly by the queen. On her Majesty's arrival in London she consented to sit in her carriage with her back to the horses, while Alderman Wood, with excessively bad taste, occupied the seat by the queen's side. Throughout the whole of the trial the *dragonne* sat by her Majesty. "Poor Joan of Arc," wrote the queen, her better nature roused by this touching fidelity, "has really proved herself true to de name I used to give her, *pour me moquer d'elle.* She has staid wid me through it all, and God He knows dat was no small trial. Poor soul, I hope He will reward her for her courage"[1]

The mob, however, who cheered the queen on every possible occasion, knew nothing of these touching traits in her character. They applauded her courage, they reprobated the treatment to which she was exposed, and they had neither thought nor regard for any other consideration. The queen's popularity was, indeed, for the moment, increased by another circumstance. The House of Commons had been adjourned to the 23rd of November. It met on that day at two o'clock, and Denman rose at once with the object of presenting a communication from the queen. As he rose Black Rod entered the House. Mingled shouts of "Denman!" "Withdraw!" "Shame!" prevented a word of Black Rod's message being audible. Tierney, when Black Rod had retired, declared that nothing that had fallen from him had been heard, and that

Parliament prorogued.

[1] *Diary*, vol. iv. pp. 60, 77, 79, 93.

the purport of his message could not, therefore, be known. The Speaker, however, rose from his chair and proceeded to the Lords, followed by Castlereagh, Vansittart, and other members; and, amidst a scene of almost unparalleled excitement, Parliament was prorogued. The ministry gained little by this manœuvre. The delivery of the queen's message was prevented; but the message itself was, of course, immediately published. The queen stated in it that she had received a communication from the king's ministers, plainly intimating an intention to prorogue the Parliament immediately, and accompanied with an offer for her support, and for providing her with a residence until a new session could be holden." "This offer," the queen added, she had had "no hesitation in refusing," as she "felt that she could no longer receive from the ministers what she is well assured the liberality of the House of Commons would have granted, as alike essential to the dignity of the throne and demanded by the plainest principle of justice."

So ended the memorable session of 1820. During the short recess, which followed it, both parties endeavoured to obtain some expressions of popular support. On the queen's side, little endeavour had to be made. Addresses poured in upon her from every part of the country; and all classes and both sexes united in congratulating her. But there was a quiet minority on the king's side desirous of making a counter-demonstration. Private meetings, composed of persons in a respectable position, met and drew up loyal addresses to his Majesty. The queen's friends declared that the king's supporters were "hole-and-corner" men. The king's friends, to a certain extent, acknowledged the justice of the charge by endeavouring to prevent the assembly of county meetings, and by packing the few meetings which they themselves attended. In Cheshire the sheriff refused to put to the meeting an amendment to the address, proposed by the queen's friends; and in Dublin the sheriff declined to allow the queen's friends a hearing, and threatened to call in the military to his support.[1] These proceedings naturally exasperated the queen's

Demonstrations in the recess.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. iv. pp. 901–917.

supporters. Wellington subsequently increased their exasperation by declaring that the public opinion of Hampshire was already sufficiently expressed, and that it was unnecessary to go through the "farce of a county meeting." This unfortunate phrase increased the irritation of the Opposition. They endeavoured to infer from the duke's expression that the ministry regarded county meetings "as mere farces." Words justifying such an inference would have been unfortunate in the case of any ministry. They were doubly unfortunate when they were used by a minister who had been a party to the Six Acts.

Before the irritation which these events occasioned had subsided Parliament met, on the 23rd of January 1821. But the ministry was unable to meet its supporters with an unbroken front. A month before, the only really powerful speaker in the House of Commons retired from the Cabinet; and the only Cabinet ministers who were left to support Castlereagh in the Lower House were Vansittart and Robinson. Canning was one of the oldest friends whom the queen possessed in this country. He had been in the constant habit of accepting her hospitality at Blackheath and at Kensington, and neither his acceptance of office from the Regent nor the rumours which disturbed the world had destroyed his regard for her Majesty. Those, indeed, who had enjoyed her hospitality could hardly avoid remembering with pleasure the hours spent in her company. Her suite was occasionally compelled to witness improprieties which must have been peculiarly distressing; but her guests had the privilege of enjoying the best society in London. The queen delighted in collecting the people who were best worth knowing round her dinner-table, and she had the art to set them entirely at their ease. Lewis, whose extraordinary romance gained him the nickname of the "Monk," Sheridan, Whitbread, Canning, Byron, Lawrence were among her guests; the little court at Blackheath and Kensington became, in its way, as sparkling and attractive as the more exalted society at Carlton House. Long after the queen left the country, in 1814, Canning probably recollected with pleasure the agreeable hours which he had spent in her society.

Resignation of Canning.

She returned; and he found himself a member of the Cabinet forced to consider the propriety of taking proceedings against her. His colleagues understood the difficulty of his position, and proposed that he should remain among them, taking as little part as possible in the proceedings. Canning complied with their desire. He saw with satisfaction the steps which Wilberforce was taking to arrange a compromise; and he clung to the hope that some arrangement might be concluded which might satisfy her Majesty and extricate him from his embarrassing situation. Wilberforce failed; and Canning at once sought an interview with the king and tendered his resignation. The king commanded him to remain in office, abstaining as completely as he might think fit from any share in the proceedings against the queen;[1] and, with perhaps some misgivings, Canning felt himself compelled to obey his Majesty's commands. He remained in office; he took no part in the preparation of the Bill of Pains and Penalties; he took no part in the Cabinet discussions to which it led; he even left England during a portion of the autumn. But a Cabinet minister cannot perpetually hold aloof from the proceedings of his colleagues. Canning returned to England. The unsavoury subject of her Majesty's position was still in every one's mouth; and he felt it impossible to continue in a Government from which he was so widely separated on the chief topic of the day. He again sought an interview with the king, and again tendered his resignation of office. It was at first intended that the fact of Canning's resignation should be kept private. But a secret, which is known to five or six persons, is usually no secret at all. Some one or other whispered it to the editor of the *Courier;* the *Courier* duly announced it in its columns; and Canning was

[1] The king's commands were given with extreme reluctance, at the instigation of Liverpool. So sore was the king on the subject that he threw his surrender in Liverpool's teeth nine months afterwards. "The king might also add the instance in which he sacrificed the most painful personal feelings and opinions to the advice and earnest desire of Lord Liverpool that 'the king should not accept the resignation of Mr. Canning, but suffer him to remain in his councils,' in spite of the very unwarrantable conduct of that gentleman (as a member of the Cabinet) in his place in Parliament."—Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 152.

consequently compelled to explain to his constituents his reasons for resigning.[1]

Canning's resignation was the unfortunate but inevitable consequence of the ill-advised proceedings against the queen. His loss was a serious one to his colleagues. It was, indeed, hoped at first that Peel might be persuaded to fill the place which Canning had vacated. Such an arrangement would undoubtedly have proved most beneficial to the ministry. Peel already occupied a very different position from that which he had filled as Chief Secretary of Ireland. He had acquired considerable reputation in office, but he had gained a much higher reputation since his retirement from the Chief Secretaryship. But Peel declined to become the champion of a ministry which had covered itself with unpopularity; and the Government was consequently compelled to resort to a provisional arrangement, and to give the office which Canning had vacated to Sidmouth's brother-in-law, Bragge Bathurst, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Peel refuses to join the Ministry.

Thus the ministry was compelled to meet Parliament without obtaining any fresh accession of strength. "Never was anything so low and wretched as the Treasury Bench. It is quite disgraceful and contemptible." So wrote Fremantle, a close observer, to Lord Buckingham. "As to the ministers," said an influential member in the House of Commons, "they had fully proved their inability to govern; never was the community so universally impressed with the conviction of the incapacity of their responsible rulers as at the present moment; so general was that feeling that all ranks of men looked to their removal as their only hope."[2] But, contemptible as the ministry was, the tide was already turning in its favour. It was known that it had been decided to take no further measures against the queen; to offer her a house and an income of £50,000 a year; and to couple the grant of

Parliament meets.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 537.

[2] Curran, in debate on the Address. *Hansard*, vol. iv. p. 46. *Memoirs of George IV.*, vol. i. p. 112.

this income with no conditions. These resolutions effectually damped the ardour which the public had displayed in the queen's behalf. It was one thing to be enthusiastic for a queen who was the heroine of a divorce bill; it was another thing to be enthusiastic for a lady, who was quietly enjoying an income of £50,000 a year. Nine-tenths of the mob who had shouted for her Majesty had no decent dwellings of their own; and they could hardly be expected to take an interest in the question whether the queen occupied one of the king's empty palaces or some equally comfortable house. Nine-tenths of the mob, too, probably never entered a church, and they could hardly be expected to take much interest in the question whether her Majesty's name should or should not be inserted in a Liturgy which they never heard. The popularity of the queen, too, declined for another reason. On the advice of Brougham she announced her intention to take no income from Parliament "while her name continued to be excluded from the Liturgy."[1] But, though for the moment she adopted this courageous advice, she had not the courage to abide by it. She wrote to Liverpool and asked for an income. These facts were, of course, soon known; and the House of Commons was encouraged by the knowledge of them to dispose rapidly and effectually of the queen's business. One member moved for papers relative to the omission of her Majesty's name from the Litany, and was defeated by 310 votes to 209. Another member moved a vote of censure on the ministry, and was beaten by 324 votes to 178. A third member moved for the restoration of her Majesty's name to the Prayer Book, and was beaten by 298 votes to 178. The Act authorising the queen's annuity was hurried through Parliament; the Duke of Cambridge's house in South Audley Street was bought for her; and politicians turned with relief from discussing the guilt or innocence of the queen to the measures of internal policy which required their consideration.[2]

Unfortunately if various reasons tended to diminish the

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. iv. pp. 236–238.
[2] Ibid., vol. iv. pp. 139–219, 361–421, 429–510, 620–666.

queen's popularity, her conduct did not increase her favour among her friends. If there were any one person to whom she was indebted it was Lady Anne Hamilton; but she soon forgot even her obligations in this quarter. Lady Anne Hamilton was made Mistress of the Robes; but her promotion removed her from personal attendance upon the queen. Serious people like Lady Anne were, indeed, ill-fitted for her society. She had lived so long—so she said herself—among Turks, Jews, and infidels, that she was not fit for good company. She gave various entertainments at her house in London; but she did not like being stuck up among fine people. Though she possessed a suitable residence in London, she preferred Brandenburgh House, at Hammersmith, to South Audley Street. At Hammersmith she is said to have received a succession of Italian visitors of no very high order.[1] There were few English people whom she cared to invite to her house, or who cared to receive her invitations.

Decline of the queen's popularity.

Preparations were in the meanwhile being made for the coronation of George IV. It had originally been intended that the king should have been crowned on the 1st of August 1820. The most elaborate arrangements had been made for the ceremony. A new crown, worth £54,000, had been ordered for his Majesty to wear. Magnificent dresses, involving inordinate expense, had been ordered for his suite.[2] The officials at the Board of Works had hunted for precedents as to the course pursued on previous occasions, and had relied upon "Sandford's description of the coronation of James II. as the fullest record of the ceremony." The interior of Westminster Hall and the interior of Westminster Abbey were transformed under their "directions," and everything prepared for an imposing display. The arrival of the queen in England put a sudden stop to these preparations.

The coronation decided on.

[1] Denman, vol. i. p. 185, 186.

[2] The coronation was estimated to cost £100,000; it actually cost £238,000! The hire of jewels for the crown—the king choosing to keep them for twenty-two months—cost £11,000. The robes £24,000 (Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 467). The expense was severely commented on in Parliament.—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. ix. pp. 828, 1106.

Orders were issued for the indefinite postponement of the ceremony. But orders, in those days, could be carried only slowly to the distant colonies of the British Empire. The news that the coronation had been postponed did not reach Montreal till after its celebration by the loyal colonists.[1]

The time, however, had now arrived when it was necessary to resume the suspended arrangements for the coronation of George IV. Workmen were again observed busily preparing Westminster Hall for the ceremony; and, though no official announcement was made, it was evident that the coronation was to take place in the course of the summer. The news that the preparations for the ceremony had been resumed found their way to Brandenburgh House. On the 29th of April the queen wrote to the king through Liverpool, announcing her intention of attending the coronation, and requesting his Majesty's orders as to the dress which she should wear, and as to the suite by whom she should be attended during the ceremony. His Majesty's orders were sufficiently explicit. Liverpool was instructed to reply that it was "his Majesty's prerogative to regulate the ceremonial of his coronation in such manner as he may think fit; that the queen can form no part of that ceremonial, except in consequence of a distinct authority from the king, and that it is not his Majesty's intention, under the present circumstances, to give any such authority." The queen protested in reply that she was determined to "attend." Liverpool was instructed to answer that it was the royal pleasure that she should not do so; and, with this threat on one side and this rejoinder on the other, the correspondence between the queen and the Prime Minister ended.[2] A month after the termination of the correspondence, or on the 9th of June, a proclamation was signed appointing the 14th of July for the coronation. On the 14th of June the proclamation was read, amidst all the pomp of military display, in Westminster and in the City. The queen's advisers drew up a memorial to the king in council, claiming as of right that the queen should be crowned at the

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., pp. 158, 164, 268, 402.
[2] Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. pp. 126–130.

same time as the king; and the memorial was duly referred by his Majesty to the Privy Council.

The Council met at the Cockpit on Thursday, the 5th of July.[1] The meeting was largely attended. Two royal dukes, York and Clarence, Wellington, and other ministers were present at it. One or two bishops were in attendance to give the authority of the Church to the decision of the Council. Some of the judges were in attendance to lend to it the authority of the Bench. Some members of the Opposition and some independent members of Parliament gave an appearance of impartiality to the least impartial of tribunals. Brougham and Denman were heard in support of her Majesty's claim. The Attorney and Solicitor-General were heard in reply. The chamber was cleared; their lordships deliberated, and adjourned; they resumed their sitting on the following Tuesday; and, "after a long and solemn deliberation, decided that the queens consort of this realm are not entitled of right to be crowned at any time." It followed that "her Majesty the Queen is not entitled as of right to be crowned at the time specified in her Majesty's memorial."[2]

The Queen's claim to be crowned.

The queen could hardly have expected any other answer from the tribunal to which her memorial had been referred. And it would have been impossible for any tribunal to have arrived at any other decision. Sentiment may have been in favour of her claim, but precedent was hopelessly against her. All the learning and all the eloquence of Brougham and of Denman were unable to gainsay the stern logic of facts. On only eight occasions since the Conquest had a King and Queen of England been crowned together. On many occasions the queen had never been crowned at all, and on many others she had been crowned long after her husband. It was hopeless, with these facts as they stood, to make out a strong case for the simultaneous coronation of George IV. and Caroline of Brunswick. It would have been much wiser to have abstained from raising the case at all. But the queen's mistakes did not cease with

[1] The Privy Council assembled in those days at the Cockpit. The Treasury now stands on its site.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 109.

the decision of the Council. The Privy Council had solemnly decided that she had no claim to be crowned; but she still persisted in being present at the coronation. The decision of the Privy Council was communicated to her on the 10th of July. On the next day she wrote to Sidmouth to inform him that it was her intention to be present, and to demand "that a suitable place might be prepared for her reception." Lord Sidmouth simply referred her to her previous correspondence with Liverpool, and added a point-blank refusal to the queen's last request. Baffled by the ministry, the queen applied to the Duke of Norfolk and the Archbishop of Canterbury, desiring the former, as Earl Marshal, to have persons in attendance at the Abbey to conduct her to her seat; and intimating to the latter her desire to be crowned some day after the king, and before the arrangements were done away with, so that no extra expense might be incurred. The Earl Marshal replied through his deputy that he had submitted the application to Lord Sidmouth, and that he could not have the honour of obeying her Majesty's commands. The Primate answered that he could take no part in the ceremony of her Majesty's coronation, except by "orders from the sovereign." Marshal, Primate, and Ministry all had decided against the queen's claim. The queen would have been wise to have submitted to their decision.[1]

And to attend the coronation.

But Caroline of Brunswick had no intention of confessing herself defeated. She had never yet flinched from any difficulty; and she had advisers whose determination was equal to her own. On the day on which she received the replies of Primate and Earl Marshal she signed a formal protest and remonstrance, prepared by her advisers, in which she narrated her claim and recapitulated her grievances. "The Queen, like your Majesty"—so a portion of this document ran—"descended from a long race of kings, was the daughter of a sovereign house connected by the ties of blood with the most illustrious families in Europe; and her not unequal alliance with your Majesty was formed in full confidence that the faith of the

Her protest.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 325.

king and the people was equally pledged to secure to her all those honours and rights which had been enjoyed by her royal predecessors. In that alliance her Majesty believed that she exchanged the protection of her family for that of a royal husband and of a free and noble-minded nation. From your Majesty the Queen has experienced only the bitter disappointment of every hope she had indulged. In the attachment of the people she has found that powerful and decided protection which has ever been her steady support and her unfailing consolation. Submission from a subject to injuries of a private nature may be matter of expedience, from a wife it may be matter of necessity, but it never can be the duty of a queen to acquiesce in the infringement of those rights which belong to her constitutional character."

The queen signed the remarkable protest from which these extracts have been given on Tuesday, the 17th of July. On the following day Westminster was busy with the preparations for the great pageant of the morrow. Long before daybreak on the Thursday the streets from Charing Cross were thronged with foot-passengers, while two strings of carriages were conducting their fortunate occupants to the places which had been assigned to them either in the Hall or in the Abbey. The illustrious occupants of the carriages converging on the Abbey and the Hall became impatient of the long delays to which they were subjected, and, descending from their vehicles, mingled, decked as they were with plumes, silks, and jewellery, with the enormous multitude which surrounded the Abbey walls. The good-humoured mob gazed with pleasure on the splendid and grotesque dresses, which looked doubly splendid and grotesque by the side of their own attire. "Nothing," said a contemporary annalist, "could be more impressive than the good order and quietness which everywhere prevailed." The good order was remarkable, for the temper of the mob was to be subjected to one great trial. Very early in the morning the hum of distant voices announced the approach of some personage of importance; the indistinct hum, gradually acquiring distinctness, foretold the arrival of the queen.

The queen left her house in South Audley Street at five o'clock in the morning. Six bay horses drew her coach of state. Lady Hood and Lady Anne Hamilton sat opposite to her Majesty; Lord Hood followed in his own carriage. A large crowd swarmed through South Audley Street and Hill Street to witness her Majesty's departure. The crowd thronged her carriage as it wound its way through Park Lane, Piccadilly, Constitution Hill, and St. James's Park to Dean's Yard, Westminster. The soldiers presented arms as her Majesty passed; the air rang with the acclamations of the assembled people; a few cries of disapproval were drowned in the shouts which greeted her approach. She was witnessing for the last time "the powerful and decided protection" of the people, which had ever been "her steady support and her unfailing consolation." Her coachman drove on to Palace Yard, where a temporary platform stopped the way, and it was impossible to drive any further. Descending from her carriage with her ladies, and leaning on Lord Hood's arm, her Majesty, after much difficulty, proceeded to the door entering the Abbey at Poets' Corner. Lord Hood demanded admission for the queen; the doorkeeper quietly answered that he could admit no one without a ticket. Lord Hood had a ticket in his pocket; but the doorkeeper declined to admit more than one individual. Lord Hood asked the queen whether she would enter alone. For the first time in her life her Majesty hesitated and turned away. Her doing so was the signal for the decision of the crowd. Faint notes of disapproval had been audible amidst the shouts of applause which had welcomed her Majesty on her drive from South Audley Street to Palace Yard. The fashionable portion of the company, at window and in gallery, had ventured to mark their disgust on her arrival at the Abbey. The crowd itself which had surrounded her had displayed feelings rather of curiosity than of approval. Her success would have probably stimulated their cheers; her failure only provoked their laughter. Her Majesty might have said with James of Scotland in the poem:—

The Queen refused admission to the Abbey.

"Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?"

But she still preserved a calm demeanour, and, entering her carriage, amidst shouts of "Shame!" and "Off!" drove home—to die.

In the meanwhile the heralds were marshalling the procession in Westminster Hall. Led by a sergeant, in a scarlet mantle, first came the children of the King's Chapel, the children of the Abbey choir, the gentlemen of the King's Chapel, in scarlet; the choir of Westminster, in white surplices. The Dean bore the crown, which sparkled with precious stones; the first prebendary bore the golden orb, the second prebendary the golden sceptre surmounted with a dove, the third prebendary the sceptre royal, the fourth prebendary St. Edmund's staff, the fifth prebendary the chalice and the patina, the sixth prebendary the Bible. Precisely at ten o'clock a signal gun, fired from a man-of-war in the river, announced the arrival of his Majesty and the commencement of the ceremony. Dean and prebendaries, passing the choristers, made their obeisances to the king and delivered the regalia to the Lord High Constable. A second gun was fired at half-past ten. At that hour, preceded by maids and messengers, trumpeters and kettledrums, dignitaries of the Bar and dignitaries of the Church, Knights Commanders and Knights Grand Crosses, Judges and Councillors, by his son-in-law, by his five brothers, by the regalia, borne by the most exalted of his subjects, the king moved from the Hall to the Abbey. A canopy of cloth of gold, carried by the Barons of the Cinque Ports, was over his head. His train was borne by eight youths, the least exalted of whom was heir-apparent to the senior earldom of the kingdom. Thus preceded and thus supported, the king walked from his throne in Westminster Hall to his chair of state opposite the altar in the Abbey. The Abbey was brilliant with the rich apparel of the ladies who had been admitted to it and the splendid uniforms of the foreign ministers. Its old roof rang with the shouts of welcome and the anthems of the choristers. The Primate presented the king to the people; the king,

The scene in Westminster Abbey.

kneeling at the altar, made his oblation—a pound weight of solid gold. The Litany was read; a sermon was preached by the Archbishop of York; the oath was administered; the king was anointed; the sword of state was girt upon him, solemnly returned to the altar, and redeemed for a hundred shillings by the senior peer. The Dean of Westminster placed the armill round his Majesty's neck and put the robe royal on the king. The Archbishop delivered the golden orb into the king's hand, and placed the king's ring on the fourth finger of his right hand. The Lord of the Manor of Worksop presented a pair of rich gloves to the king; the Archbishop committed the sceptre with the cross to the king's hand; and finally, amidst the shouts of the people, the pealing of the trumpets, and the firing of guns, placed the crown upon the king's head. The Dean of Westminster gave the Bible to his Majesty; the peers did homage; all the people cried "God save King George the Fourth!" the king, kneeling at the altar, received the Sacrament, and the ceremony in the Abbey terminated.[1]

The ceremony in the Abbey lasted from eleven in the morning till four in the afternoon, and was succeeded by a still more splendid display in Westminster Hall. The noble Hall wore a new aspect on the day of the coronation. Two tiers of galleries, supported by twenty iron pillars, were crowded with the fortunate persons admitted to witness the spectacle. Six dinner-tables, each fifty-six feet long, accommodated the numerous guests who had the honour of being bidden to the banquet. Twenty-eight magnificent lustres, each containing sixty wax candles, were suspended by chains of gold from the angels in the roof. The king's throne was placed immediately under the south window of the Hall, and six gilt Gothic elbow-chairs were prepared for the other members of the royal family. The first course was ushered in with a magnificent procession, in which Lord Howard of Effingham, as Deputy Earl Marshal; the Duke of Wellington, as Lord High Constable; and Lord Anglesey, as Lord High Steward, rode on horseback. The course being served, the

The scene in Westminster Hall.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., pp. 339–380.

entrance was again cleared, and young Dymoke, hereditary Champion of England, mounted on a horse borrowed from Astley's Theatre, rode into the Hall, threw down his gauntlet, and delivered his challenge. These and other ceremonies being completed, the company proceeded to the discussion of the princely banquet which had been served up to them. One hundred and sixty tureens of soup, one hundred and sixty dishes of fish, one hundred and sixty hot joints; more than three thousand other dishes had been prepared for the company. More than eight hundred dozens of wine and one hundred gallons of punch were provided at this magnificent feast.

A stronger head than that of George IV. might easily have been turned by the events of the day. All the rank, all the beauty, all the worth of the kingdom had been collected to do him honour. He had been the centre of a temporary adoration which falls to the lot of few men. The greatest of his subjects had condescended to perform for him the offices of menial servants. Lord Hertford, the Lord Chamberlain, had brought him his shirt in the morning; the Duke of Wellington, as Lord High Constable, had ridden in the procession which served his dinner in the evening. The company bidden to Abbey and Hall had been dressed with a magnificence which even George IV. had never previously witnessed. Prince Esterhazy, in particular, "glimmered like a galaxy,"[1] and Abbey and Hall rang with acclamations loud enough and long enough to do honour to the most virtuous of princes. The choir brought the banquet to a close by singing the anthem, "*Non nobis, Domine.*" Princes and courtiers, prelates and ministers had on that day given the honour, not to God, but to the king.

The glories of the Abbey and the Hall were necessarily reserved for the greatest of his Majesty's subjects. Long, however, after the banquet in the Hall was concluded the people

[1] Sir W. Scott, in Lockhart's *Life*, p. 456. Scott could not learn positively whether the prince had on the renowned coat which is said to be worth £100,000. The coat seems to have been preserved till 1838, when it was apparently seen by "Mr. Barney Maguire"—

"'Twould have made you crazy to see Esterhazy
All jools from his jasey to his di'mond boots."

enjoyed the festivities which had been prepared for them. London was in a blaze with brilliant illuminations. A brig-of-war, decked from stem to stern, was moored off the Strand. Fireworks were displayed in all the parks, and fire-balloons cast additional brightness on the scene. It was computed that five hundred thousand persons shared, in some way or another, in the festival; and amidst this vast aggregation of people there was no riot, no disorder, no ill-humour. London had indulged in a universal revel, and the revel had been marred by no disturbance. The festivities, however, did not end with the fireworks in Hyde Park. At the close of the succeeding week the king held a levée and a drawing-room, and received the cordial congratulations of the foreign ministers and of his own subjects. Never had levée or drawing-room been more crowded. Never had a larger company assembled to do honour to the king.[1]

The King arranges to visit Ireland.

The enthusiasm with which the king was everywhere greeted was partly stimulated by another cause. Since his accession to the throne the king had contemplated paying a visit to his subjects in Ireland; and his intentions in this respect were warmly encouraged by all classes of politicians. One hundred and thirty years had passed since a king of England had landed on the shores of Ireland. The last king who had paid Ireland a visit had come to place himself at the head of his victorious battalions. The state of Ireland was at least as critical in 1821 as on the landing of William III. in 1690. But George IV. came, not on a mission of war, but with the hope of inspiring peace. Nor was a journey to Ireland in 1821 an easy matter for a person accustomed to the luxuries to which George IV. had habituated himself. An ordinary passenger, dining in London on one day, may now count as a certainty on breakfasting in Dublin on the following morning. But in 1821 men thought themselves fortunate if they completed the journey in three days' time, and without any serious accident. The magnificent road which Telford has constructed through the valleys of the Dee, the Llugwy, and the Ogwen was

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., pp. 108–112, 324–391.

still incomplete. The Menai Straits had not been spanned; and passengers from Wales to Anglesey had to encounter the exposure and the risk inseparable from crossing a narrow strait in an open boat. The most direct road to Ireland was by Holyhead; but the most comfortable method of reaching Ireland was to go to Portsmouth. The king drove down to Portsmouth on the last day of July. He embarked on board his yacht on the same evening. But before he reached his journey's end serious and unexpected news awaited him. The queen had never recovered from the disappointments and the fatigue which she had endured on the 19th of July. She had made one more effort to be crowned before the decorations were removed from the Abbey, and she had met with one more repulse. She still, indeed, preserved her gaiety; but she was worn out with fever and vexation. A few days after the coronation she was "dancing, laughing, and romping" with a large party in her own house; but her excitement was evidently unnatural, her spirits overstrained. Two or three days afterwards she was taken ill at Drury Lane Theatre. On Wednesday, the day on which her husband was leaving Portsmouth, her physicians were apprehensive of danger. On the Thursday she was so ill that she was advised to make her will. A slight rally on the Saturday caused her attendants, rather than her physicians, to hope for her recovery. But the acute symptoms, which had been subdued for the time, returned with new force on the Tuesday morning. Enfeebled by fever and inflammation, her Majesty had no strength to rally against this new attack. The pain, subdued for a moment by an opiate, returned with fresh violence. The queen sank into a stupor, and, after lying two hours in that state, died.[1]

The death of the queen was regarded by the ministers "as the greatest of all possible deliverances, both to his Majesty and the country."[2] It can hardly be doubted that king and cabinet felt that they were relieved by her death from constant embarrassment; but it was almost immediately

The Queen's death.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, p. 119. Denman, vol. i. p. 188.

[2] Lord Londonderry to Lord Eldon; *vide* Twiss's *Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 432.

apparent that her death had caused other difficulties which could not have arisen in her lifetime. While she lived the people had begun to forget her grievances; when she died all her former popularity at once returned. It soon became known that she had desired to be buried in Brunswick, and that she had directed her coffin to be inscribed, "Here lies Caroline of Brunswick, the injured Queen of England."[1] A sense of her injuries, the recollection, perhaps, of their own recent neglect, roused the passions of the populace, and it was decided to organise a great demonstration in honour of her Majesty's funeral. The ministers, in the meanwhile, made their own arrangements. They decided that the queen's remains should be conducted, on the seventh morning after her death, from Hammersmith to Harwich, and embarked at that port on board the *Glasgow* frigate; that the procession should be escorted through the metropolis by a squadron of the Horse Guards; and that cavalry reliefs should be stationed at Romford, at Chelmsford, and at Colchester. Her Majesty's ladies protested against the haste with which these arrangements were made; Lady Hood entreated that the military escort might be countermanded, and that her Majesty's remains might be left to the protection of the people, who had been her "only friends in her lifetime." Remonstrance and appeal were alike in vain. The ministry refused to reconsider any portion of the arrangements or to postpone for an hour the funeral procession. Every part of the plan was firmly adhered to.

Her funeral.

The morning of the 14th of August was very unseasonable. The rain fell in torrents; and the drenching downpour seemed calculated to cool the enthusiasm of the mob. A wet day had often marred a popular demonstration, and pouring rain promised on the present occasion to render effectual assistance to authority. An unseemly altercation arose, indeed, at the outset. Her Majesty's executors firmly prohibited the removal of the body. The undertaker insisted on performing the orders which he had received from the Government. Authority prevailed: the procession was formed.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 392.

It was announced that it would proceed through Hammersmith and Kensington; turn to the left near the Church, and so pass on to the Uxbridge Road, through Tyburn Turnpike, down the Edgeware Road and the New Road to Islington. Led by the Horse Guards, the procession moved on till it reached the spot where the old church at Kensington has lately been replaced by a modern structure. Drawn across Church Street, twenty deep, the populace barred the road; the main road towards London was left open. It was in vain that the constables endeavoured to force a passage through the people. The people stood firm, and their firmness prevailed. The procession moved on to Hyde Park Corner, where it again attempted to wheel to the left. The people again resisted; but the troops prevailed. The head of the procession was turned from the City towards Cumberland Gate. But the populace was not prepared to abandon the contest. A desperate attempt was again made, near the spot where the Marble Arch now stands, to turn the procession once more towards the City. The populace assailed the troops with mud and stones. The troops fired upon the mob. Powder and lead, backed by discipline and authority, gained a victory. Two men were shot dead, and the procession moved on.

Authority had so far prevailed. Lord Sidmouth had willed that her Majesty's remains should not pass through the City, and Lord Sidmouth's directions had been so far complied with that the funeral procession was passing down the Edgeware Road. Powder and lead had won their way; and, at a cost wholly disproportioned to the end, the object had been partially attained. But, though a temporary victory had been won, the contest had not been decided. The vociferations of the multitude which surrounded the procession pointed to the necessity for employing more force. Force was not again necessary till the troops arrived at Tottenham Court Road. Every avenue to the East was totally blocked with waggons, carts, and dense masses of the people. The avenues to the City were alone open. Powder and shot would have been powerless to force a way through the formidable barricades which thus arrested the

progress of the procession. In sheer despair the troops turned down Tottenham Court Road, and, passing through Drury Lane, reached the forbidden precincts of the City. The Lord Mayor placed himself at the head of the procession; no further resistance was attempted; and the remains of the unhappy queen were allowed to proceed to Romford and Harwich.

All classes of the people were excited to an extraordinary degree by the news of these discreditable proceedings. The Radicals compared the conduct of the troops with the proceedings of the military at Peterloo, and wrote of the "spirit-stirring massacres of Manchester and Cumberland Gate." Calm-judging men laid the blame on the ministry, and thought its conduct incredible. The ministry laid the blame on the police magistrate, Sir R. Baker, and removed him from his situation as a punishment for his irresolution. Sir Robert's solitary offence was that he had consented to the procession turning down Tottenham Court Road. The friends of the queen rejoiced at the victory of the people; the friends of the king clamoured for the punishment of the queen's supporters. Most of these, indeed, were independent of the Government; but one person, who had made himself conspicuous in the procession, was an easy mark for their resentment. Sir Robert Wilson had taken an active part in the procession; and he was, in consequence, removed from his commission in the army.

Sir R. Wilson removed.

The gentleman, who was thus selected to feel the full weight of the king's displeasure, was a distinguished officer. He was the son of Wilson, a painter of repute; and his military service had commenced, when he was only sixteen years old, in the Low Countries. Since then he had been almost continuously employed on active service. He had assisted in quelling the Irish rebellion of 1798; he had taken a part in the campaign of 1799; he had shared in the glories won by British valour in Egypt in 1800; he had served in the Brazils in 1805; he had been present at the capture of the Cape of Good Hope in 1806; he had been attached to the combined armies of Prussia and Russia from Pultusk to Friedland; he had commanded the advanced guard

of Beresford's army in the Peninsula; he had been again employed as military attaché to the Russian Court in 1812; and he had done good service in the decisive campaign which rolled back the battalions of Napoleon from the Elbe to the Rhine. Nor were his military services, great as they undoubtedly were, his only claim to the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen. He had written the best account which had yet appeared of the Expedition to Egypt; he had written the only available description of the character and composition of the Russian army; he had kept, though he had not published, diaries of the campaign of 1812. His distinguished services had recommended him to the electors of Southwark, and at the general election of 1818 he had been returned for that borough. He had been re-elected at the general election of 1820.

Such was the man who was selected to bear the brunt of the king's displeasure. Sir Robert Wilson was dismissed from the service. The conduct of the ministry in assenting to his dismissal was as unwise as the conduct of the officer which had in the first instance provoked it. A liberal subscription was at once raised for a gallant soldier who was now regarded as a martyr, and the liberality of the public fully compensated Sir Robert for the loss of his professional emoluments. The opinion of the public on the unhappy events which had marked the queen's funeral was displayed in other ways. Coroners' juries were, of course, assembled on the two unhappy men who had fallen at Cumberland Gate. One of the juries returned a verdict of manslaughter against the troops in general; the other a verdict of manslaughter "against a Life Guardsman unknown."[1] The passions of the multitude had been temporarily allayed by the splendid fêtes with which the coronation had been celebrated. They were again excited by the action of the ministry which was responsible for the deplorable bloodshed at Cumberland Gate.

In the meanwhile the king was at Holyhead, anxiously expecting news from London. It was obvious that he could not make his public entry into Dublin while his wife was on

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 128.

her deathbed, and he was compelled, therefore, to wait impatiently either for her death or her recovery. The news came: the queen was dead; and on Saturday, the 11th of August, before she was "cold in her grave," as Byron put it in the philippic which he wrote on the occasion, the king crossed over to Dublin. The wind was contrary; and the king, leaving his yacht, embarked on board the *Lightning* steam-packet. A favourable passage of only six hours brought him to Howth. His carriage was in readiness for him; but the citizens generally had not expected his arrival. A signal gun, however, announced that he had touched the Irish shore. The Irish poured forth from street and alley to welcome his arrival. The king, who had been drinking all the way from Holyhead to Howth, was in a condition of rollicking good-humour.[1] He shook hands with scores upon scores of his subjects who crowded round his carriage; and, surrounded by the multitude, drove slowly to the Phœnix Park. There he addressed the people in one of the most singular speeches which ever proceeded from the mouth of a monarch. He thanked them all; he thanked them for escorting him to his very door; he might not be able to express his feelings as he wished; he had travelled far; besides which peculiar circumstances, known to them all, had occurred, of which it was better at present not to speak; he left it to delicate and generous hearts to appreciate his feelings. Generous and delicate hearts were the last which could have appreciated the feelings of the monarch at the death of his injured wife. They might have imagined that, on the first tidings of her death, her husband might have had the decency to forget his own feelings and to think a little of her wrongs. Had they any such anticipations the king's next sentence must have rudely disabused them. "This," the king went on, "this is one of the happiest days of my life. I have long wished to visit you. My heart has always been Irish. From the day it first beat I have loved Ireland." The false compliment was followed by one touch

The King reaches Ireland.

[1] Fremantle, repeating the gossip of the day to Lord Buckingham, says he was "in the last stage of intoxication."—Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 194.

of truth. "Go and do by me as I shall do by you—drink my health in a bumper. I shall drink all yours in a bumper of good Irish whisky."

The king remained in Ireland for rather more than three weeks. During the whole of that time his appearance was everywhere welcomed with enthusiasm.

> "Is it madness or meanness which clings to thee now?
> Were he God—as he is but the commonest clay,
> With scarce fewer wrinkles than sins on his brow—
> Such servile devotion might shame him away.
> Ay, roar in his train! let their orators lash
> Their fanciful spirits to pamper his pride."

The scathing satire with which Byron celebrated the occasion was justified by the extraordinary enthusiasm which the king everywhere excited. From his first arrival at Howth to his last departure from Dunleary the Irish were never tired of pouring out to welcome him and to cheer him. In compliment to him the name of the port from which he embarked to England was changed from Dunleary to Kingstown; and statesmen seemed justified in anticipating that the happiest consequences would result from the royal visit. It will be necessary in a future chapter to relate the miserable disappointment which followed these anticipations. The boisterous greeting with which the Irish welcomed George IV. was, in fact, no more trustworthy than the favourable breeze which wafted the king from the shores of Ireland. The royal squadron sailed from Kingstown for Portsmouth on Wednesday, the 5th of September; but contrary winds compelled it to return, and it did not reach Milford Haven till the following Sunday. It was detained in Milford till Tuesday, the 11th, when it sailed with the hope of reaching the Land's End. But the appearance of the morning was again deceptive. As the night came on the wind shifted, a violent tempest arose, and the royal party was glad to put back to Milford, where it arrived on the afternoon of Wednesday, the 12th. A whole week had been consumed in the journey from Kingstown to Milford; and, sick of the sea, the king left his yacht

and proceeded by land to London. On the 20th of September he again left England, on a visit to his Continental Kingdom of Hanover.[1]

[1] The king's reception at Hanover was less uproarious than his greeting in Ireland; and his Majesty was disappointed at German phlegm. "What does he think of his German subjects?" asked some one on his return. The reply was peculiarly happy—"He is 'Tacitus de moribus Germanorum.'"

CHAPTER VII.

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FLOOD TIDE.

THE five concluding years of the reign of George III. form the most miserable epoch in modern English history. The war was over; the feverish excitement which the contest had created was succeeded by a dull torpor. The public was no longer sustained by the news of successive victories; and it was no longer in ignorance of the cost at which those victories had been secured. The most appreciable relique of the war was the huge debt which it had placed upon the shoulders of the nation. During the continuance of the struggle peace had been desired as the era of lighter financial burdens. Peace came; and most of the taxation under which the nation had been labouring was continued. The load was the more intolerable from the circumstance that every class of society was experiencing unforeseen embarrassments. The farmer discovered that the conclusion of the war had reduced the demand for agricultural produce. The manufacturer learned that the ruin of his foreign customers was destroying the market for his products. The shipowner found that the return of peace was terminating the monopoly in the carrying trade of the world which war had given to him. The embarrassments to which these classes were suddenly exposed reacted on every grade of society. The landlord had to submit to lower rents, the capitalist to lower interest, the labourer to lower wages. With the landlord and the capitalist hard times implied embarrassment, with the labourer they pointed to the poorhouse or famine. Starving men were naturally inclined to probe the causes of their misery. Hundreds of self-constituted advisers were ready to ascribe it to the state of politics.

Effects of the Peace.

Political agitators found a ready audience amidst a suffering population, and were easily able to persuade men without employment to demand reforms which they were assured would promote their welfare. Reform was to be obtained by the organisation of the masses; and the ruling classes were to be taught the impossibility of resistance. It was almost inevitable that disturbances should arise from the organisation of the lower orders. Unfortunately, the Government, instead of removing the cause to which the disturbances were attributable, decided on stamping out disorder. To quote the epigrammatic language of a poet, who was seldom epigrammatical, "in Britain ruled a panic dread of change." Animated by this sentiment, the ruling classes thought it the first duty of Government to preserve at any cost existing institutions, or, as they would themselves have said, the glorious Constitution. For the sake of preserving what they were pleased to term the Constitution, they set themselves deliberately to destroy the freedom which the Constitution had previously afforded. From time immemorial the people had enjoyed the right of public meeting; the right of public meeting, for the first time, was curtailed. From time immemorial every one had enjoyed the right to publish his own opinions on his own responsibility. Security, for the first time, was demanded of every publisher. From time immemorial every person accused of any offence had been entitled to a trial. The conclusion of the Great War was followed by the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

The five concluding years of the reign of George III. thus form a period of gloom. On the 29th of January 1820, George III. died. Parliament, at the time, stood prorogued till the 18th of February; but the law required that it should reassemble immediately on the demise of the Crown.[1] The 29th of January was a Saturday, and,

The death of George III.

[1] The law was regulated by 7 and 8 Wm. III. c. 15, and 6 Anne c. 7. A later statute (37 George III. c. 127) provided for the contingency of the demise of the Crown between the dissolution of one Parliament and the assembly of a new one.

in obedience to this law, Parliament assembled on the Sunday. The next few days were occupied with swearing in members, and both Houses then formally adjourned to the 17th of February. On that day Liverpool, in the Lords, and Castlereagh, in the Commons, presented a formal message from the new king; the king announcing his father's death, and his intention to dissolve the Parliament without delay. This announcement could not have been unexpected by the Opposition. Brougham had, some days before, issued his address to the electors of Westmoreland; and the preparations for the general election had, therefore, already begun. The law, in fact, required that the dissolution should take place within six months of the demise of the Crown. The question, therefore, for consideration was not whether Parliament should be dissolved at all, but whether it should be dissolved in March or in July. It was difficult to conceive that much importance could be attached to the decision of this question; but a section of the Opposition was opposed to the determination of the Government. On four previous occasions—on the accession of Anne, of George I., of George II., and of George III.—Parliament had at once addressed itself to the consideration of the Civil List; and the same course, it was argued, ought to be followed again. It was urged, moreover, that after the demise of the Crown the country expected some declaration of policy from the new sovereign, and that there was reason for complaining that no such explanation had been given by the monarch. These and other arguments, however, did not carry much weight among the majority of either House of Parliament. A motion, approving the intended dissolution, was agreed to; arrangements were concluded for the extension of the Mutiny Act to the 24th of June; the House of Commons voted certain sums of money for the purposes of Government; and then, having disposed of these matters, Parliament was prorogued on the 28th of February, and dissolved a fortnight afterwards—on the 13th of March.[1]

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xli. pp. 1642, 1643. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 15–28.

The general election of 1820 was not remarkable for any ebullition of popular feeling. Comparatively few changes were made in the representation, and the strength of parties was only slightly varied. On the 21st of April the new Parliament assembled; on the 27th it was formally opened by the king. George IV. regretted, in his speech, that the state of the country did not permit him to dispense with the additional military force which he had been compelled to ask for during the previous session; he directed the attention of the House of Commons to the provision to be made for the support of the Civil Government;[1] he expressed his satisfaction at the promptitude with which the machinations and designs of the disaffected had been suppressed by the activity and vigilance of the magistrates; and he anxiously looked forward to the mitigation of the distress which still prevailed among the labouring classes. The king's speech did not provoke any immediate opposition. Addresses, re-echoing his sentiments, were voted unanimously, and both parties reserved themselves for a conflict on a more definite issue. The Opposition had, in fact, been checkmated by the prudence of the ministry. The new king had desired to make a good thing out of his accession to the throne; but the ministry had wisely and steadily refused to make any addition to the Civil List. The arrangement was a much better bargain for the public than some of the Opposition had anticipated, and the bargain had been only obtained "by the most determined refusal of ministers to do more."[2] The determination of ministers was the more commendable, because the king threatened to punish their obstinacy with dismissal. "He has been pretty well disposed," wrote Eldon, "to part with us all, because we would not make additions to his revenue. This we thought conscientiously we could not do in the present state of the country and of the distresses of the middle and of the lower orders."[3]

The dissolution and general election of 1820.

The Civil List, which thus became a subject of dispute

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. p. 12. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 40.
[2] Buckingham's *Memoirs of Geo. IV.* vol. i. p. 18. [3] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 363.

between the king and his ministers, was of comparatively recent origin. Until the concluding years of the seventeenth century all the revenues of the country were bestowed on the king; the king was responsible for the entire cost of Government; the taxes which were voted to him were never appropriated to any particular purpose; and the expenditure which he incurred was never subjected to any audit. As, however, the hereditary revenues of the Crown proved insufficient for all the purposes of Government, the House of Commons was, from time to time, compelled to supplement them with extra grants. Before the Revolution of 1688 these grants were usually made unconditionally to the king. After the Revolution they were appropriated to express purposes. The king was thus gradually relieved of certain charges which had previously been thrown on the Crown, and the nation took upon its own shoulders the cost of the military and naval services, and the burden of the national debt. The full effects of the change were hardly seen at the time at which it was made. On the accession of Anne, however, the hereditary revenues of the Crown were obviously insufficient to provide for all the costs of Government. A Civil List Act was passed; and the hereditary revenues, and certain other taxes, were settled on the queen "for the expenses of the Civil Government" alone. A similar course was pursued with the two succeeding sovereigns. The hereditary revenues, and certain other taxes, were settled upon them for the support of the household and the expenses of the Civil Government. But on the accession of George III. a different arrangement was made for the first time. A long experience had proved that the Crown was incapable of managing its revenues, either to its own advantage or to that of the public; and it was decided, therefore, that they should be paid into the aggregate or Consolidated Fund, and that a fixed sum of £800,000 a year should be issued to the king for the support of his household and the expenses of the Civil Government. Unfortunately this sum proved inadequate for the purpose for which it was voted. During the long reign of George III. Parliament was

The Civil List.

required from time to time to pay debts, incurred by the Crown, amounting in the aggregate to about £3,400,000. During the same period it was compelled to augment the Civil List till it ultimately reached £1,083,727, and to relieve it from various charges which had been previously thrown upon it.[1]

The Civil List, fixed in 1816 at £1,083,727, was reduced in 1819, after Queen Charlotte's death, to £975,727. George III.'s death naturally made some further savings possible. The expense of the Windsor establishment, and of the privy purse of the late king, had amounted to £130,000; and without these charges the Civil List only required a sum of £845,727. The figures were rounded off for the sake of appearances, and a sum of £850,000 a year was voted for the Civil List. The Crown now enjoys a Civil List of only £385,000; but it must not consequently be supposed that her Majesty receives £465,000 less than her uncle, George IV. In the time of George IV. the entire cost of foreign embassies and consulships was thrown on the Civil List; pensions amounting to £95,000 a year, and the salaries of the Chancellor, of the Judges, of the Speaker of the House of Commons, of the Lords of the Treasury, and of other great officers were also charged upon it. These various charges, from which the Civil List has since been relieved, absorbed about £410,000 a year. Without them the Civil List of George IV. did not exceed £440,000 annually.

Its amount.

But £440,000 a year represented only a portion of the income which was placed at the absolute disposal of George IV. In addition to it, the Crown enjoyed the Civil Lists of Scotland and Ireland,[2] as well as other revenues, which by a

[1] Returns of Public Inc. and Exp., part ii. pp. 593–600. Cf. Sir E. May's *Constitutional History*, vol. i. pp. 198–215. The return referred to in the text is Parl. Paper, No. 3, Sess. 1837.

[2] The Irish Civil List amounted to £207,000 a year. Return of Public Inc. and Exp., part ii. p. 603. The hereditary revenues of Scotland yielded £109,000 annually. The Crown, however, derived no pecuniary interest from these sources. The charges on the Irish Civil List for the civil government of Ireland amounted to £145,000 a year, and the balance was more than absorbed by the pensions which had been lavishly granted out of it. The charges on the Irish Civil List will be found in Parl. Ret. of Inc. and Exp., part ii. p. 401;

singular anomaly had never been surrendered to the public. It still retained in its own hands the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster; the heir-apparent was still allowed to enjoy the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall. The Crown, moreover, still retained uncontrolled authority over the droits of the Crown, the droits of the Admiralty, and the 4½ per cent. West India duties. The droits of the Crown consisted of royal fish, of wreckage, of jetsam, flotsam, and ligan; of the royalty of mines, of treasure trove, of waifs and strays, of forfeitures, of deodands, of escheats of lands in default of heirs.[1] The droits of the Admiralty consisted of ships belonging to an enemy captured in war. The 4½ per cent. West India duty was a customs duty on the produce of the island, originally granted in 1663 by the Assembly of Barbados, "in consideration of the great charges that there must be of necessity in maintaining the honour and dignity of his Majesty's authority here."[2] The Crown soon applied to its own uses a revenue which had originally been granted to it for colonial purposes; and a sum of money voted by the colony for local objects was wasted on pensions lavished on the favourites of the Court and the supporters of the ministry.[3]

Additional sources of revenue enjoyed by the Crown.

The various casual revenues, the principal of which have been thus enumerated, yielded in the aggregate about £12,700,000 during the long reign of George III. The Crown, on an

the pensions in ibid., p. 616. The Scotch Civil List was in a similar condition. The receipts were notoriously insufficient to defray all the charges of civil government in Scotland. Ibid., p. 36.

[1] Royal fish comprised whale and sturgeon, thrown ashore or caught near the coasts. Wreckage, goods lost at sea and thrown on shore. Flotsam were goods floating on the water; jetsam, goods sunk under the water; ligan, goods tied to a cork or buoy and unclaimed by any owner. Waifs were *bona waviata*, or goods stolen and thrown away by the thief in his flight. Strays were valuable animals found wandering without an owner. Deodands comprised any chattel which had been the immediate occasion of the death of any reasonable creature, and which was, *deo dandum*, forfeited to the king for pious purposes.

[2] Return Public Inc. and Exp., p. 463.

[3] Sir E. May, in his *Constitutional History*, seems to imagine that the 4½ per cent. duties were distinct from the West India duties (vol. i. p. 205). It seemed, therefore, desirable to give a somewhat accurate account of the origin of these duties.

average, received more than £200,000 a year from these sources. The droits of the Admiralty alone yielded no less than £9,500,000 during the period, the supremacy of Britain at sea having enabled her cruisers to sweep the enemy's traders into British ports. The Crown, however, it is only just to add, had not appropriated the whole of this amount to its own use. Nearly £5,400,000 had been devoted to rewarding the captors of the prizes; £2,600,000 had been applied to the public service. But the residue, or £4,700,000, had been devoted to defraying the debts of the Civil List, and to the increase of the king's private income. The Crown had enjoyed, on an average, some £80,000 a year from these sources.

Brougham's attack on the Civil List.

Brougham perceived the objectionable nature of this arrangement more clearly than any of his contemporaries; and seized the opportunity which the commencement of a new reign afforded him for attempting to terminate it. He proposed to relieve the Civil List of the salaries of the judges, of the Speaker, of the foreign ministers, and of other unsuitable charges; to pay all the casual revenues of the Crown into the Consolidated Fund; and to grant the Crown, in place of them, an adequate provision for maintaining its dignity. He was met by Canning with arguments which might have been employed in the days of George II. "The honourable member," said Canning, "wishes that the regal department of the State may be recast anew, and every vestige of ancient feudal monarchy removed. . . . He has expatiated on the danger of leaving the Crown in possession of a power of conferring pensions charged on funds not within the control of Parliament. For my own part I think it better that the Crown should reward public services by property under its own peculiar protection than that a democratic assembly should dole out largesses and favours according to the impulse of passion, party, or canvass." The vigorous eloquence of Canning obtained an easy victory over the arguments of Brougham. The ministerial party voted compactly in favour of the prerogative of the Crown, and Brougham's amendment

was rejected by 273 votes to 155.[1] The ministerial majority was swelled by the circumstance that many members who admitted the force of Brougham's reasoning doubted the policy of adopting his resolution at that time. In the first place, the king, as regent, had been in enjoyment of the casual revenues for some years, and it seemed unjust to deprive him of them because his father's death had necessitated a change in his title. In the next place, the droits of the Admiralty of recent years had been increased by the war; and, if this opportunity were taken for surrendering them, the Crown would probably be able to make an exceptionally good bargain for itself, and an exceptionally bad one for the public.[2] These reasons might have fairly influenced the votes of any member. Instead of adopting them Canning rested his case on grounds which would hardly have been tenable a hundred years before. How shortsighted are the views of the wisest statesmen! Within eleven years from the date of Canning's speech another sovereign ascended the throne of England; and the ministry of 1831 recommended Parliament to adopt the course which Canning had wasted his eloquence in resisting eleven years before.

Brougham's motion was heartily supported by a section of the Opposition; and the circumstances of the country gave strong emphasis to his demand for economy. The year 1819 had been marked by continuous distress. An extraordinary diminution in the trade of the country had necessarily made a marked impression on all classes of the community.[3] Capitalists could find no employment for their money; workmen could find no employers for their labour; and landlords, groaning under exceptional taxation, could find no tenants for their land. The revenue of the country was naturally affected by the universal depression of

Universal distress of all classes.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. pp. 133, 163. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 94-99.

[2] See Thomas Grenville's opinion, in Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 18.

[3] The official value of the imports had decreased from £35,845,340 to £29,681,640; the declared value of the exports of British produce had decreased from £45,180,150 to £34,252,251.—M'Culloch's *Com. Dict.*, ad verb. Imports and Exports.

industry. The Finance Committee of 1819 had estimated the revenue of the year at £54,000,000. Additional taxation, which had produced £500,000, had been imposed since the committee's report. But, notwithstanding this resource, the actual revenue had only amounted to £53,000,000;[1] and the Consolidated Fund had proved unequal to the discharge of the liabilities upon it. Under these circumstances the duties of a finance minister were not pleasant. He had to provide for the expenditure of the country out of a failing revenue. The task, moreover, which was thrown on Vansittart had been made more difficult by the events which had recently occurred. The remembrance of the Peterloo Massacre was still fresh in men's minds; the "battle" of Bonnymuir was the latest incident in the military history of England; the horrible details of the Cato Street conspiracy had just been revealed at the trial of the conspirators. The plots of a few obscure Radicals may have formed no solid basis for apprehension; but the upper classes were seriously alarmed. The ministers, participating in these fears, insisted on increasing the military force. They were so confident of the popularity of their decision that they almost declined to justify its expediency. "The reasons for this increase of force are so notorious," they argued, "that any attempt to prove the necessity was a waste of time and a trifling with the public understanding."

The Budget.

The decision of the ministry, however, seriously increased the difficulties of Vansittart. The army estimates were raised from £8,782,470 to £9,422,000; the navy estimates, from £6,436,781 to £6,586,700; the ordnance estimates, from £1,191,000 to £1,204,600; and the miscellaneous estimates, from £2,078.197 to £2,100,000. The supply services, in short, as they would now be called, required £19,313,300, instead of £18,488,448. Fortunately

[1] These figures are from Vansittart's Budget speech (*Hansard's Debates*, New Series, vol. i. p. 1166). In the figures which follow, and which are taken from the same speech, Vansittart excluded from one side the whole charges of the Consolidated Fund, amounting to nearly £34,000,000, or, with the Sinking Fund, to about £51,000,000; and from the other side the permanent taxation which formed that fund.

for Vansittart, the charge of the unfunded debt had decreased. In 1818 and 1819 the interest and sinking fund upon it had amounted to £2,000,000. The same charges were placed in 1820 at £1,410,000. The whole supply, therefore, which it was necessary for Parliament to provide amounted to £20,723,000; and towards this supply there was an available revenue of exactly £6,000,000.[1] There was, in other words, an apparent deficit of £14,723,000. The deficiency, however, was merely nominal. The Sinking Fund, which was still faithfully maintained by the minister, now amounted to rather more than £17,000,000. The termination of the Sinking Fund would have at once converted a deficit into a surplus. But the ministry had not yet learned the simple lesson that a change of creditors is not synonymous with a reduction of debt. The farce of paying off debt with one hand and incurring fresh debt with the other was still religiously performed. The operation, however, was at length becoming so ludicrous that its real nature was gradually appearing to every one. In 1820 Vansittart hardly attempted to conceal the expedient which he adopted. Four-fifths of the whole deficiency—or £12,000,000—was raised by a loan from the Sinking Fund Commissioners, and the residue only was borrowed in the open market. Vansittart himself seems to have perceived the obvious inconsistency of this course. He thought it necessary to make an elaborate apology for borrowing in the open market, instead of taking the whole sum which he required from the Sinking Fund Commissioners. The purchases of the Sinking Fund Commissioners, he explained, had the effect of maintaining the value of stock; and he was not prepared to risk the fall in its price which might possibly result from their cessation. It does not seem to have occurred to him that a fresh loan must have made the same

[1] Annual malt duty £3,000,000
Temporary Excise 2,500,000
Lottery 240,000
Naval stores, Sale of 260,000
Total £6,000,000
As to these duties see preceding note.

impression on the money market in one direction as the purchase of an equal amount of stock would have made in another. But Vansittart's inconsistencies did not stop at this point. He had still to provide for the interest of the new debt which he was most unnecessarily creating. The debt which the Sinking Fund Commissioners held on paper had accumulated to £144,000,000, and Vansittart at one stroke of the pen reduced it to £100,000,000. The Sinking Fund Commissioners were deprived of the interest on £44,000,000 of stock, and the amount which was thus saved became, of course, available for the charge of the new debt which Vansittart created.[1]

Suspension of political conflict during the Queen's trial.

The scheme, of course, provoked much criticism. But men's minds were too full of other matters to dwell with any persistency on the inconsistencies of Vansittart's finance The Budget had been proposed on the 19th of June, and on that evening Castlereagh had announced to the House of Commons the failure of the informal conference between the commissioners of the king and the queen. Men of all shades of opinion were occupied in discussing what had passed, and in conjecturing what would follow, and Vansittart's financial statement was consequently addressed to an inattentive and uncritical audience. Nor was it possible at any later period of the session to awaken much interest in Parliament in any subject except one. The profound impression which the proceedings against the queen created made every other subject appear trivial and inopportune. The ministry, which was responsible for these proceedings, undoubtedly derived one advantage from the unpopularity with which their concession to the king was regarded. In Parliament all real opposition was suspended. It was obvious that the offensive task which the ministry had set itself had to be discharged; and no public man outside the Cabinet would have taken office at the cost of fulfilling it. It was everywhere evident that, for good or for evil, the Liverpool Administration must remain in power until the queen's business had been finally

[1] *Hansard* vol. i. pp. 1161–1179.

settled. Outside the walls of Parliament, moreover, the queen's trial had a somewhat similar effect. The demand for Radical reform ceased, because men forgot to agitate for reform in their desire to agitate for the queen. From June to November the attention of the legislature and of the country was fixed on one all-absorbing topic, and almost every other subject was either passed over in silence or forgotten.

For more than six months, then, men almost entirely occupied themselves with the concerns of the queen. They forgot their own afflictions in the presence of her grievances. The queen's trial became the engrossing topic of the day, and party politics lost their interest. The attention of the public was in this way for a time diverted from the schemes of the Radicals and the designs of the disaffected; and the country, instead of agitating for reform, was contented with enthusiastically supporting the queen. The passions, however, which the queen's trial had excited were at least as strong as those which in previous years had encouraged Hunt, Watson, Thistlewood, and others to agitate for political reform or for the violent subversion of the Government. The Acts which the ministry had introduced for the express purpose of curbing the license of the press proved wholly ineffective; and "newspapers, placards, pamphlets, and caricatures of the most filthy and odious description were exposed for sale in every street, alley, and lane of the metropolis."[1] The printers of these broadsheets were, indeed, able to plead the example of their opponents as a partial excuse for their own conduct. Late in November 1820, when the proceedings against the queen had terminated, a Sunday newspaper suddenly appeared, and almost immediately obtained a large circulation. It was called by its projectors the *John Bull;* its declared object was to attack the queen; and it carried on the attack with unscrupulous ability. Unscrupulous ability was, indeed, to be expected from the *John Bull.* Its principal conductor, Theodore Hook, was distinguished, among a generation of good talkers, for his wit; and the powers

Passions created by the Queen's trial.

The *John Bull* and Theodore Hook.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 69.

which won him admission to the best society in London secured a speedy popularity for the new paper.

Theodore Hook was the son of a musical composer; he was educated at Harrow; but the ordinary studies of a public school were ill adapted for his peculiar genius. At an early age he wrote a comic opera, "The Soldier's Return," which was received with favour. The success of this attempt influenced the youthful author's career. He frequented the "green-room," where his brilliant wit ensured him a ready welcome. Rumours of his extraordinary genius were soon heard in more exalted society. The Regent threw open the doors of Carlton House to Theodore Hook, and laughed at his impromptu verses and witty epigrams. The favour of the prince obtained for his guest an appointment in the Mauritius. Hook became Accountant-General and Treasurer of the colony. He seems to have passed his colonial life eating good dinners and singing good songs. The duties of his office were probably, in his eyes, the last matters which required his attention. His neglect resulted in serious consequences. A defalcation of £12,000—it was at first thought of £20,000—was discovered in his accounts, and Hook was arrested and brought back to England. Something, as he himself put it, was "wrong in the chest," and Hook, in consequence, with scanty means and with extravagant tastes, found himself in London.

Such had been the history of the man who became the principal conductor of the new paper, whose special mission was to denounce the queen. Half measures were not in favour with its editor, and, under Hook's conduct, the war was at once carried into the enemy's camp. *John Bull* commenced its career by publishing those contents of the "green bag," which the ministry had hitherto kept private.[1] It attacked without mercy every lady who visited the queen; and it did not hesitate to make gross imputations upon the characters of some of them.[2] The supporters of the Regent were delighted to avail themselves of the services of an ally who carried on the battle with weapons which their opponents had previously monopolised, and with

[1] Denman, vol. i. p. 183. [2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 50.

an ability which their opponents could not command. The Radicals, encouraged by the example of a paper which was admitted to every fashionable breakfast-table, scattered in their turn new periodicals broadcast through the metropolis. The conductors of these periodicals had no more scruples than Theodore Hook; but they had neither the wit nor the ability which were the redeeming features of *John Bull*. The upper classes were shocked at the utter disregard of decency which these publications displayed, and decided on taking some steps to prevent their dissemination among the lower orders. A considerable number of persons formed themselves into an association "for supporting the laws for suppressing seditious publications, and for defending the country from the fatal influence of disloyalty and sedition."[1] The association numbered among its members Tory peers, Tory bishops, Tory statesmen, Tory clergy: men whose Tory principles had already received their reward in this world; men who hoped for a reward for their fidelity to the same cause. The society called itself the Constitutional Association: it was known to its opponents as the "Bridge Street Gang." Its first efforts were useful. It drew up an exposition of the English law of libel, which it distributed gratuitously among the chief dealers in the offensive literature of the time; and it persuaded many of these men to desist from a trade which subjected them to the penalties of the law.

The Constitutional Association.

If the association had contented itself with merely explaining the law, no exception would have been taken to its proceedings. Unfortunately, the society selected some of the publications, which it considered the most libellous, for prosecution; and it commenced proceedings against their authors, their publishers, or their vendors. The supporters of the association were hardly prepared for this course. They were quite ready to check the spread of indecent publications by persuasive measures, but they were not prepared to arm a wealthy society with power to proceed against obscure authors and printers.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 60.

It was one thing to desire that the printing press should be pure; it was another to subject needy scribblers to the pains and penalties of a criminal prosecution. Even decency could be purchased at too high a price; and the liberty of the press was an object of more importance than public morals. The association, moreover, had obtained so many subscribers that its exertions were crippled by its success. It was hardly possible to impannel a jury without including some member of the Bridge Street Gang in the pannel. The judges, in consequence, made a new rule to meet the exceptional nature of the case, and in every prosecution instituted by the society compelled every juryman to state on oath whether he were a member of the association or not.[1] Before the end of 1821, an indictment was laid by "the Gang" against a man named Dolby; and the sheriff by whom the jury was returned was proved to have been a member of the association.[2] Cases of this character convinced even the subscribers to the society that organisations of the nature of the Bridge Street Gang were objectionable. A series of debates in the House of Commons confirmed these suspicions. The results which the association had already attained were but small. "After a year and a half's work," wrote the *Edinburgh Review*, "they have convicted a fustian-cutter at Manchester of selling an address to the Reformers: one wretched old man of seventy, whom they were fain to allow to plead guilty upon an engagement never to bring him up to judgment; and a lad or two whom they detected selling in a shop things the nature of which they were incapable of understanding."[3] Small, however, as the results of the association had been, its activity perceptibly declined when it was found that the policy of its prosecutions was open to question. The attacks of the Opposition upon it became more and more warm; its defence by the Government became more and more cool. The chilling support of its friends was probably more fatal to the society than the hot onslaught of its opponents. The Bridge Street

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 62. [2] Ibid., Chron., p. 482.
[3] *Edinburgh Review*, vol. xxxvii. p. 115.

Gang gradually restricted its operations, and expired without notice and without regret.

The Bridge Street Gang would, under any circumstances, have fallen when its real nature was explained to its supporters. But there was another reason for its gradual cessation. The currilous publications which had originally influenced its well-meaning subscribers owed their origin to the universal excitement which the proceedings against the queen had fomented. With the termination of these proceedings the temper of the public became comparatively calm; and the language of the writers who had inflamed the passions of the multitude became proportionately cool. Happily, too, there was another cause for better feeling. During the early part of 1820 the manufactures of the kingdom remained in a condition of continuous depression. But, as the year wore on, the appearances of trade became slightly more hopeful. The king, in the beginning of 1821, was able to assure the Parliament that "a considerable improvement has taken place within the last half year in several of the most important branches of our commerce and manufactures;" and that "in many of the manufacturing districts the distresses which prevailed at the commencement of the last session of Parliament have greatly abated." Happily, the king's satisfaction was justified by the facts of the case. The trade of the country had increased. The official value of the imports had risen from £29,681,460 in 1819 to £31,515,222 in 1820; the declared value of the exports from £34,252,251 to £35,569,077. The improvement was slight; but the slightest improvement was acceptable. In 1821, moreover, the gradual return of better times became more and more perceptible. The demand for labour increased; the labouring classes succeeded in obtaining better wages; and the burden on the ratepayers was alleviated. At the end of 1820 the weekly pay of the outdoor poor in Birmingham amounted to £614; in December 1821 it had been reduced to £374. The roll of paupers in receipt of relief had, in the same period, been

Gradual improvement in trade.

reduced in the same place from 5148 to 3571 persons.[1] It is impossible to describe more clearly the gratifying improvement in the circumstances of the manufacturing population which commenced in the latter half of 1820, and continued throughout 1821.

Continued depression of the agricultural interest.

But there was one remarkable exception to the general improvement. The agricultural classes had enjoyed the special protection of the legislature. Means had been taken in 1815 for securing them a remunerative price for their produce; and the farmers had been given a monopoly of the market while the price of wheat was below 80*s.* a quarter. Rather more than five years had passed since the Act of 1815 had become law, and the condition of the agricultural classes was worse than it had ever been. "Agriculture," wrote Bankes to Lord Colchester in March 1821, "is in a state of the most serious and discouraging depression, the price of corn as low as it was thirty years ago; rents ill paid, farmers breaking or ruining themselves, and multitudes of laborious husbandmen all over the kingdom thrown out of work and living on the poor-rates."[2] The Act of 1815 had, in fact, failed. It had been based on the hypothesis that its existence would maintain prices, and, by a strange perversity, prices had steadily fallen. In February 1819 the average price of wheat had stood at 78*s.* per quarter, and the importation of foreign corn had in consequence been stopped. No foreign grain was imported till the middle of 1822, and during the whole of the intervening period prices had been steadily falling. The average price of wheat amounted in 1820 to 65*s.* 9*d.*; in 1821 to 54*s.* 5*d.*; in the first three months of 1822 to 47*s.* 9*d.* The primary cause of this fall was to be found in the over-production which the Act had itself stimulated. Its consequences were serious. The landed classes had speculated on a rise in prices; the fall in prices consequent on the over-production of corn overwhelmed them with ruin.

The distress of the agricultural classes, in the first instance due to over-production, had been aggravated by the return to

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 193. [2] Colchester, vol. iii; p. 214.

cash payments which had been decided on in 1819. In consequence of the return to cash payments the price of gold had fallen to its real value, and the fall in the value of gold had been followed by an equal or greater fall in the price of every other article. The price of iron had fallen from £13 a ton in 1818 to £8 a ton in 1822; the price of cotton from 1*s.* to 6*d.* a pound; the price of wool from 2*s.* 1*d.* to 1*s.* 1*d.* the pound.[1] This sudden alteration in the prices of the principal articles of trade naturally led to considerable embarrassment. The few fortunate people who had lent money when gold commanded a high premium were benefited by the change. The interest which they received on the loans which they had advanced was capable of purchasing nearly twice as much corn, cotton, wool, and iron as before. But the numerous persons who had been compelled to borrow money found themselves in the contrary predicament. The profits of their business were reduced by one half; but the interest which they had to pay on the loans which they had contracted was unaltered. The country gentlemen were, as a rule, heavily in debt. A country gentleman usually provided for his younger children by charging his estate with a mortgage in their favour, and from this cause alone many estates were heavily burdened. The impulse which had been given to agriculture during the war had the effect of multiplying these mortgages. The country gentleman had fancied that a short road to wealth was to be found in the enclosure of an adjacent common or the drainage of a neighbouring swamp. Vast quantities of land were enclosed or improved, and the enclosures and improvements were made with borrowed money. While wheat fetched from 80*s.* to 120*s.* the imperial quarter, the expectations of the country gentlemen had not been disappointed. The improvements increased their incomes, and encouraged their neighbours to follow their example. The country gentlemen, indeed, supposed that the Act of 1815 had made it impossible for wheat to fall below 80*s.* a quarter. Till wheat reached this price they were safe from foreign competition, and they imagined that nothing but

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 114.

foreign competition could reduce the price of grain. The over-production of corn at home had, however, exactly the same effect on the market as the importation of corn from abroad. Prices fell, and with the fall of prices the poor land which had been brought into cultivation could no longer be profitably worked. The country gentleman's tenant threw up his farm; but the country gentleman himself could not throw over the mortgage which he had contracted to make the farm. The rent ceased; but the interest of the debt hung like a dead weight round the neck of the unfortunate landlord.

There was no doubt about the reality of the crisis through which the landed classes were passing. The landed classes, it must be recollected, were the ruling classes. No ministry could stand without their favour; no ministry could afford to neglect their grievances. The members for the great agricultural counties were not agreed as to the course which should be pursued, but they were unanimous in determining that something should be done. The great majority of them would, indeed, have been incapable of devising any remedy for themselves. They supported a Tory Government, and they thought that the least a Tory Government could do for them, in return for their support, was to ensure them high prices for their corn. But there were some half dozen among them who were not satisfied with leaving the matter to the decision of Government. Western, the member for Essex; Holme Sumner, the member for Surrey; Gooch, the member for Suffolk; and Sir Thomas Lethbridge, the member for Somersetshire, have not left any very great names behind them; but these four men, and one or two others of like calibre, were conspicuous in every agricultural debate, and were, in their way, formidable supporters or opponents. It was Western's attitude in 1816 which had induced the Government to abandon the war malt tax. Holme Sumner, on the 30th of May 1820, moved for a select committee on the agricultural distress. The debate lasted a great many hours: the country gentlemen had the opportunity of explaining their grievances; economists like Ricardo replied to them; and

Attitude of the county members.

ministers stated their objections to the motion. Every one imagined that the subject would be talked out. As the night wore on, or, to speak more correctly, as the morning dawned, sleepy members went home to bed, and the country gentlemen were left almost in possession of the House. At four o'clock in the morning the debate came to an end. A division, which no one had expected, was taken; and Holme Sumner, to his own surprise, found himself in a majority of 150 votes to 101.[1]

Their unexpected success.

The victory which the agriculturists thus unexpectedly secured proved almost as embarrassing to themselves as to the Government. The country gentlemen, on their part, were hardly ready for the investigation which they had demanded, and the ministry foresaw the inconvenience of granting it. Sober men were of opinion that the appointment of a committee would raise vague hopes and vain alarms among the farmers, and that, even if the committee were appointed, it would be impossible for it to do anything whatever. The Government was so impressed with the force of these considerations that it decided to take the sting out of the unlucky vote. Robinson, the President of the Board of Trade, was instructed to move that the committee should "confine their investigations to the mode of ascertaining, returning, and calculating the average prices of corn." Under the existing law the corn averages were calculated in twelve maritime districts; and the agriculturists contended that the averages should be ascertained from the markets throughout the United Kingdom. An inquiry of this sort could not by any possibility encourage any false expectations; and the Government accordingly brought up all its forces to limit the functions of Holme Sumner's committee in this way. Numerical strength, of course, gave them an easy victory. Within forty-eight hours of the previous division Robinson's motion was carried by 251 votes to 108. The sting had been effectually taken out of Holme Sumner's victory.[2]

The ministry had got rid of an embarrassing inquiry, but

[1] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. i. pp. 635, 691. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 64–76.
[2] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. i. pp. 714–742.

it had not succeeded in improving the position of the agricultural classes. The summer came; and the valleys and hills in every part of England were clothed with crops of extraordinary abundance. Old men declared that such a harvest had been known only once before during the lifetime of the existing generation.[1] In any other circumstances the bounty of nature would have removed all traces of despondency from every farmstead. In the exceptional circumstances of 1820 it only increased the embarrassments of the farmer. The price of wheat had been slowly rising throughout the summer; it touched 73*s.* 9*d.* in the middle of August. There appeared, at last, to be some chance of its becoming remunerative to the agriculturist. The abundant harvest disappointed this expectation. The markets, already glutted with corn, were at once affected. The price of wheat fell to 63*s.* 6*d.* in September; to 57*s.* 4*d.* in October; to 56*s.* 4*d.* in November; and to 54*s.* in December.[2] The gloom of the farmers became, in these circumstances, as marked as ever; and their distress seemed the more intolerable because it was no longer shared by the other classes of the community. The textile industries of the Northern counties were especially recovering from their depression; and the labouring classes were finding ready employment, at remunerative wages.[3]

Increased distress among the agricultural classes.

Influenced by these circumstances, the agriculturists in Parliament again moved, in the session of 1821, for an inquiry into their grievances. Gooch, the member for Suffolk, revived Holme Sumner's motion of the preceding year. The ministry was not strong; it was suffering from the loss of Canning's services and from the unpopularity which the proceedings against the queen had brought it. It did not dare to offend the country gentlemen, and it accordingly assented to the appointment of a committee.[4] Care, however, was taken that the committee should not be composed of country gentlemen and their spokesmen alone. Some of the ablest members of the House were placed upon it; and, to

Their proceedings in Parliament.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 435. [2] Ibid., Chron., p. 632.
[3] Ibid., 1821, Hist., p. 69. [4] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. iv. pp. 1139 1161.

their intense annoyance, the agriculturists found themselves worsted in their own committee. They withdrew from its meetings, in the hope that it would separate without reporting. Their secession had, however, a contrary effect. The free traders had it all their own way.[1] They drew up a report of considerable length and of marked ability; they analysed all the grievances of the farmers with great care; they disposed of all the remedies which had been suggested for removing them; and they concluded that, "so far as the present depression in the markets is the effect of abundance from our own growth, the inconvenience arises from a cause which no legislative provision can alleviate; so far as it is the result of the increased value of our money, it is one not peculiar to the farmer, but which has been, and still is, experienced by many other classes of society." It was difficult to gainsay the justice of these conclusions, but they were truths which the agricultural committee had certainly not been appointed to state.[2]

The report of the committee was the more discouraging to the agriculturists, because they had encountered another disappointment in another quarter. On the 22nd of March, a fortnight after the appointment of the agricultural committee, Western, the member for Essex, introduced a bill for the repeal of the additional duty which had been imposed upon malt in 1819. The additional duty amounted to 1*s.* 2¼*d.* a barrel, and yielded rather more than £1,000,000 a year. The agriculturists succeeded in carrying their motion against the Government by 149 votes to 125. The victory was almost as significant as that on Holme Sumner's motion in the previous year; but the exultation of the majority was equally shortlived. Western moved the second reading of his bill on the 3rd of April. The Government exerted themselves to reverse the previous decision of the House; its exertions were, of course, successful; and the bill was thrown out by 242 votes to 144. Two days after the division, Curwen, the

The Malt Tax.

[1] Spencer, p. 202.

[2] For the report, which is well worth reading, see *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., pp. 506–535.

member for Cumberland, moved the repeal of the tax on horses engaged in agriculture. The tax was not very productive, and it fell with peculiar severity on the small farmers. The ministry did not wish to offend the country gentlemen again, and they persuaded Curwen to postpone his motion till after the report of the agricultural committee. Curwen partially complied with this request. He postponed his motion for a time; but he again brought it forward on the 14th of June, a few days before the committee reported. The committee, he was able to assure the House, had discussed the subject, and had arrived at a conclusion unfavourable to the tax. The ministry again endeavoured to procure the postponement of the motion. Curwen, however, persisted in persevering with it, and succeeded in carrying it by 141 votes to 113. On this occasion the ministry did not attempt to reverse the decision of the House. The agricultural horse tax was repealed. But the repeal of this tax afforded only slight consolation to men who had carried the reduction of the malt duty against the Government, and who had forced the ministry to concede the agricultural committee.[1]

The proceedings of the agriculturists in the recess.

The disappointment of the agriculturists was very keen; and, as the year wore on, and no improvement in their circumstances occurred, its expression became more and more audible. Abundance in 1820 had increased the embarrassments of the farmers. The harvest in 1821 was destroyed by a wet autumn. The corn lay rotting in the fields, and the farmers were unable to gather it.[2] The bad season, however, did not raise prices from the level to which the good season had reduced them. The markets were still glutted with agricultural produce; and prices continued to fall. At the end of the year wheat was selling at 46*s.* 2*d.* a quarter.[3] But the farmers were no longer

[1] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. v. pp. 42–47, 1192. *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., pp. 88–90. The voting power of the agriculturists was evidently about 150. In their three successes in 1820 and 1821 they divided: 150, 149, and 141. In their defeat on the malt tax they divided 144. The ministry owed its defeats to its own supineness, and not to the strength of the country gentlemen.

[2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 241.

[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 309.

waiting in patience for the intervention of the legislature. The report of the agricultural committee had satisfied them that nothing was to be expected from Parliament; and meetings were consequently summoned in rural counties to consider what should be done. The spectacle was one which England had never previously witnessed. The classes dependent on the land had always been notorious for the Conservatism of their views and the soberness of their opinions. Landlords and tenant-farmers, stung into action by distress, suddenly assumed the character of political agitators. Owners and occupiers joined in demanding the most drastic remedies for their grievances. The most orderly among them insisted on the entire exclusion of foreign corn from British markets, and the wholesale reduction of the taxation which pressed on the agricultural interest. The most violent among them declared that, if taxation could be reduced in no other way, faith must be broken with the public creditor and the National Debt repudiated. The Parliament, which had refused in 1820 to appoint an agricultural committee—the Parliament, which had ventured in 1821 to appoint a committee unprepared for legislation, was everywhere denounced. Landlords and tenant-farmers joined with the Radicals in demanding Parliamentary reform.[1]

The excitement in the agricultural districts was, in a political sense, a much more formidable matter for the Government than the massacre at Peterloo or the famous battle of Bonnymuir. The country gentlemen had rallied to a man in support of the Six Acts, because the Six Acts had been directed against the Radicals; but disaffection among the landed classes could not be similarly dealt with, because it destroyed the voting power of the Tory majority in the House of Commons. The ministry was, in consequence, compelled to change its tactics. It had refused inquiry in 1820; it had conceded inquiry in 1821; it courted inquiry in 1822. Lord Londonderry—for Castlereagh had succeeded to his father's Irish marquisate—himself proposed the revival of the agricultural committee.[2]

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 1, 2. [2] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. vi. p. 462.

The report which the new committee quickly drew up was much less elaborate and much less able than that which had been prepared by the agricultural committee of the previous year; but it was much better calculated to meet the wishes of the agriculturists. The Act of 1815 was self-condemned. No corn had ever been imported under it, because the price of corn had never reached the sum which had been named in it. The committee, therefore, recommended that the useless Act should be repealed, and that foreign corn should be admitted on paying a duty of 12*s.* when the price of wheat stood at 70*s.* a quarter. The duty, it was proposed, should fall as the price of wheat rose. If the price rose to 80*s.* the duty was to fall to 5*s.*; if the price rose to 85*s.* the duty was to fall to 1*s.*

A new agricultural committee appointed.

The new Corn Law which was thus contemplated would have had no effect on the existing juncture, since the price of wheat was far below the 70*s.* named in the report.[1] The proposal, however, met its chief opponent in a remarkable person. Ricardo was the most capable of the economical writers who succeeded Adam Smith. He had served on the agricultural committee of 1821; and the weight of his authority on all commercial and economical questions was recognised on both sides of the House. Ricardo was not in favour of free trade; but he desired to go a step nearer to it than the committee intended. He proposed that when the price of corn rose to 70*s.* foreign wheat should be admitted with a duty of 20*s.*; but that the duty should be reduced by 1*s.* a year till it reached 10*s.*, when it should become fixed and unalterable. The committee, in short, proposed a sliding scale dependent on the price; Ricardo a fixed duty irrespective of the price.

The debates on these rival proposals occupied the time of the House for many nights. Londonderry adopted the committee's recommendation, and its scale was agreed to by a

[1] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. vi. p. 1406. The scale was not to come into operation till the limits of free importation fixed by the Act of 1815 had been reached, *i.e.*, until wheat stood at 80*s.* a quarter. As a matter of fact this price was never reached before 1828, when the law was altered; and the Act of 1822 was consequently as inoperative as the Act of 1815.

large majority.[1] The country gentlemen were not, however, disposed to regard the acceptance of the scale as a settlement of the question. They had committed themselves at county meetings to very different measures, and regard for their own consistency compelled them to move for a more effective remedy. Sir Thomas Lethbridge, the member for Somersetshire, advocated the claims of the extreme Protectionists, and proposed a fixed duty of 40*s.* a quarter on all foreign corn. Sir Francis Burdett, the Radical member for Westminster, boldly claimed a readjustment of the public burdens. The public creditor, he argued, might be entitled to his due; but he could not be entitled to more than his due. The man who had lent his money when Bank paper was a legal tender had no right to expect that he should be paid in gold. Burdett's proposal involved the partial repudiation of the debt. Western, the member for Essex, was in favour of the same thing, though he desired, for the sake of decency, to cover the policy of repudiation with a thin veil which hardly concealed its nakedness from any one. He was not in favour of paying the public creditor £3 instead of £4; but he was in favour of depreciating the currency till the £4 was only worth £3.

The House dissatisfied.

Repudiation suggested.

When the debt was contracted corn sold for 80*s.* a quarter. The currency—so Western thought—should be depreciated till the price again rose to 80*s.*; and corn, and not gold, should be made the standard of value. One hundred and twenty-six years had passed since such a proposal had been openly advocated in the House of Commons. One hundred and twenty-six years before, the reform of the currency, which had been undertaken by Montague and Newton, had produced embarrassments very similar, in their cause and their consequence, to those which had resulted from the return to cash payments. The legislature, in 1696, had been terrified at the universal fall in prices, and had proposed to check its progress

[1] By 218 votes to 36.—*Hansard*, vol. vii. p. 470. Huskisson opposed Londonderry on a minor question connected with the Bill, and offered to resign. Liverpool wisely refused to let him go.—Ibid. vol. xix. p. 925.

by degrading the currency. Happily for England the finance minister of that day was one of the few great financiers whom this country has produced. Charles Montague met the motion of his timid colleagues with a bold declaratory resolution that "this House will not consent to alter the standard of the gold and silver coins of this kingdom in fineness." The resolution was carried; and with the success of the motion the difficulty began to disappear. Prices recovered when it was once seen that the legislature would not sanction any tampering with the currency, and confidence was restored.

Vansittart, the Chancellor of the Exchequer of 1822, was in every way inferior to Charles Montague. But an obscure office of the Liverpool Administration was fortunately occupied by a financier of greater capacity. Few things are more singular in the history of the present century than the treatment which was usually awarded to William Huskisson. Huskisson was undoubtedly the first financier in the House of Commons; yet he was never Chancellor of the Exchequer. Vansittart, who was hardly fit to be his clerk, was preferred to him in 1812; Robinson, who knew comparatively little of finance, was preferred to him in 1823. There are only two explanations which can be given for this neglect. Huskisson was passed over in 1812 because he was the friend of Canning; he was passed over in 1823 because he was much less constant in his support of the ministry than his successful colleague. Yet Huskisson, in 1822, met the country gentlemen alone; and the speech with which he defeated Western's motion was one of the most remarkable financial addresses ever delivered in the House of Commons: "The honourable gentleman says that the standard of value in every country should be that article which forms the constant food of the population. He, therefore, finds a standard of value for this country in wheat. It follows from this principle that wheat cannot be the standard in Ireland. There potatoes must be the standard of value. Who ever heard of a potato standard?" After covering Western with ridicule Huskisson went on to refer to Montague's great example in 1696, and concluded by

Huskisson's motion.

proposing that the House should reaffirm Montague's famous resolution. The effect was magical. Lethbridge's and Burdett's motions had already been defeated;[1] Western's proposition was now rejected; and the House, adopting Huskisson's suggestion, reaffirmed the resolution of 1696.[2]

The repeal of the Act of 1815 and the institution of a new Corn Law were not, however, the only results of agricultural distress. The repudiation of the debt and the degradation of the currency had been suggested because both of these methods seemed to promise a large surplus revenue; and a surplus revenue would facilitate the reduction of taxation. It was obvious, however, that a surplus revenue was also obtainable by the simple process of reducing the expenditure; and it so happened that economy, for the first time, was becoming popular among a section of the House of Commons. Joseph Hume. Joseph Hume, the constant advocate of retrenchment, had been elected for Aberdeen at the general election of 1818. He had been born in 1777, at Montrose; his father, who died while his son was young, was the master of a coasting vessel. His mother, after her husband's death, kept a small shop in which she sold crockery to her neighbours. The boy, born in these humble circumstances, was educated in the school of the town, and apprenticed to a local surgeon-apothecary. He became in 1796 a member of the College of Surgeons in Edinburgh; and he obtained in 1797 an appointment as assistant-surgeon in the marine service of the East India Company. He soon discovered that the members of the service were generally ignorant of the languages of the races whom they were called upon to govern; and, with characteristic perseverance, he set himself to study the native tongues. His perseverance was rewarded. The Mahratta war broke out. The Government required an interpreter; and Hume, who had already qualified himself for such a service, was selected for the

1 The former by 243 votes to 24, on the 9th of May. *Hansard*, N.S., vol. vii. p. 453.

2 *Hansard*, N.S., vol. vii. pp. 877, 910, 925, 1027. Macaulay's Works, edited by Lady Trevelyan, vol. iv. p. 266.

post. Frugal habits enabled him to save a considerable sum of money out of his income, and to return home, in 1808, with a fortune of £30,000 or £40,000. Three years afterwards, he purchased a seat at Weymouth, and entered Parliament as a Tory member. He had stipulated that he should again be returned at the next general election; but the patron of the borough broke faith with him and selected another candidate. Hume's Tory principles sustained a rude shock from this shabby treatment. He instituted proceedings against the patron of the borough; and, the case being referred to arbitration, recovered a large sum of money from him. But, though he recovered his money, he lost his seat. He remained out of Parliament for a few years. At the general election of 1818 he was returned for Aberdeen; he remained in Parliament for thirty-six years; and during the whole of that period he was the constant and unflinching advocate of economical reform.[1]

Hume commenced his labours in favour of retrenchment in 1820. On the 4th of July he drew attention to the costly system under which the revenue was collected. There were sixty-six receivers-general of land and assessed taxes. They were allowed a poundage of 2*d.* in the pound on the land tax, and of 1½*d.* in the pound on the assessed taxes; they retained in their own hands the whole sum which they collected for about six weeks. They, therefore, drew a very large salary as poundage, and they derived a considerable advantage from the use of the public money as it passed through their hands. It was computed that the profit of each of these officials exceeded £2000 a year. Yet only twenty-eight of the sixty-six fortunate gentlemen who enjoyed the emoluments of receivers-general performed any duties at all. The remaining thirty-eight acted entirely by deputies. Hume desired to abolish this system; but his proposal was resisted by the Government and defeated without a division. Undaunted by this defeat, Hume, in the following year, again drew attention to the extravagant system of collecting the revenue. The open

His first labours for economical reform.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1858, Chron., p. 252.

mutiny of the country gentlemen made it no longer possible for the ministry to stifle a motion for economy. On the preceding evening Western had carried the repeal of the additional malt tax; and the Government dared not risk another defeat. The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to refer Hume's resolutions to a select committee, and Hume at once acquiesced in this suggestion. The committee reported in the course of the session. It recommended that the number of receivers-general should be reduced from sixty-six to forty-four; that these officers should be paid a fixed salary; that they should be compelled to perform their own duties; and that they should not be allowed to employ the public moneys which passed through their hands. The perseverance and ability of a private member, backed by the discontent of the country gentlemen, had won one of the most important economical victories which had ever been secured in the British Parliament.[1]

Hume's exertions did not stop at this point. He was not satisfied with exposing the extravagant system under which the revenue was collected. He was bent on reducing the cost of government. With this object he drew up some elaborate tables to illustrate the progressive increase in the expenditure of the nation during the four preceding years, and to contrast the expenditure of 1820 with that of 1792, the year which had immediately preceded the Great War. He embodied the substance of these tables in a series of resolutions which he introduced during the debate on the army estimates. The country was not prepared to accept all the economies on which Hume insisted, and ministers in consequence were easily able to defeat his resolutions.[2] They were able to do so the more easily because they themselves had anticipated the universal demand for retrenchment and had reduced the expenditure. The army estimates were cut down to £8,750,000; the navy estimates to £6,176,700; the ordnance estimates to £1,195,100; the miscellaneous estimates to £1,900,000; and the charge of the unfunded debt was decreased to £1,290,000.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 105, and 1821, p. 87, and Chron., p. 101.
[2] Ibid., 1821, Hist., pp. 84–87, and Chron., pp. 282, 286.

These various items, which had required about £21,000,000 in the previous year, were placed at only £19,311,800 in 1821. In the previous year, moreover, ministers had increased their embarrassments by funding £9,000,000 of the unfunded debt. They proposed to fund only £706,400 of the unfunded debt in 1821. The whole sum which they desired to raise amounted, therefore, to only £20,018,200. The annual taxes and excise duties produced £5,500,000 of this amount. A windfall of £500,000—a surplus of the French indemnity—swelled the sum to £6,000,000. Various other items were estimated at £570,000; and the Bank of Ireland was allowed to increase its capital on condition of advancing £460,000 to the Government. These sums produced an aggregate revenue of £7,030,000. The additional £13,000,000 was borrowed from the Sinking Fund. As the Sinking Fund exceeded £17,000,000, there was no difficulty in carrying out this arrangement.[1]

The financial arrangements in 1821.

The Budget, which was thus propounded, was the simplest which Vansittart had ever framed; but it would have been impossible for the Government to have carried a more complicated one. The administration had frequently been regarded with contempt by the public; but the contempt had never been so undisguised as during the session of 1821. "As to ministers," said Curwen, in the House of Commons, on the 23rd of January, "they had fully proved their inability to govern. Never was the community so universally impressed with the conviction of the incapacity of their responsible rulers as at the present moment; so general was that feeling that all ranks of men looked to their removal as their only hope."[2] But as the session advanced the inability of the ministry to govern became more marked. On the 7th of March the Government was compelled to consent to the appointment of the agri-

Incapacity of the Liverpool Administration.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. pp. 1073–1098. These figures again exclude, from the account, the whole charge of the Funded Debt, the other charges on the Consolidated Fund, and the permanent revenues composing that fund.

[2] Ibid., N.S., vol. iv. p. 46.

cultural committee. On the 22nd of March, Western carried his motion for the repeal of the Malt Tax. On the 23rd of March the ministry was again compelled to give way, and to concede to Hume a committee on the receivers-general; and, on the 14th of June, Curwen carried the repeal of the agricultural horse tax against the Government. The ministers who had suffered such severe defeats had almost ceased to govern: it was necessary for them to acquire additional strength. The necessity was the greater because the vacancy which had been occasioned by Canning's resignation was still unfilled, and because Sidmouth was anxious to retire from the labours of the Home Department. There were three distinct quarters to which the Government could turn for aid. Canning was far the most brilliant of the Parliamentary speakers of his generation. He had only separated from the ministry in consequence of his reluctance to take a part against the queen; and the termination of the proceedings against her suggested his reinstatement in office. Peel was a younger man than Canning; but his Parliamentary reputation was increasing more rapidly than that of any other member. So far back as 1811[1] he was allowed to be the most promising young man in the House. It was said of him, in 1820, that "talents, independent fortune, official habits, and reputation, and, above all, general character, both in and out of Parliament, have disposed more men to follow and more to unite with him than any other person."[2]

Attempted reconstruction of the Government.

Canning and Peel were undoubtedly the two most prominent Tories outside the ministry available for the purposes of debate. But Liverpool was desirous of obtaining, in addition to them, the services of the small party which had identified itself with the fortunes of Lord Grenville. Ever since the conclusion of the war Grenville had been gradually separating himself from his old colleague, Grey. The one had been steadily maintaining the principles with which he

[1] Plumer Ward's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 408.
[2] Buckingham's *Memoirs of Geo. IV.*, vol. i. p. 102.

had begun his Parliamentary career. The other had been slowly gravitating towards the ministry. In some respects, indeed, Grenville had shown himself a stouter Tory than the Tories: he had urged the repressive legislation of 1819 on the Government. He did not, indeed, desire office for himself. The lead of his party had descended to his nephew, Lord Buckingham, who could have counted his supporters on the fingers of his two hands. There was his brother, Lord Nugent, who had inherited his mother's Irish earldom. There were his two cousins, sons of Charlotte Grenville, Sir Watkin Wynn, the member for Denbighshire, and Charles Wynn, the member for Montgomeryshire. There were his cousin, Sir G. Nugent, and his neighbour, Fremantle, who sat for his lordship's borough of Buckingham. There was Phillimore, who sat for his lordship's other borough of St. Mawes. Lord Buckingham might, perhaps, have commanded a dozen votes on a division by mustering all his nominees and all his relatives.

Liverpool desired to avail himself of the services of all these parties. Sidmouth was to retire from the Home Office, and to be succeeded by Melville. Canning was to replace Melville at the Admiralty; and either Peel or Charles Wynn was to fill the vacant place at the India Board. But there were two difficulties in the way of this arrangement. The king objected to Canning, and Peel thought that he had claims for a higher post than the India Board.[1] The negotiation seemed doomed to failure at the very outset; and it was also interrupted by another unfortunate event. It had hardly commenced when Lady Liverpool died. Lord Liverpool broke down under his affliction, and some months were permitted to elapse before the negotiation was resumed. The king, it was then found, still adhered to his objection to Canning.[2] Canning's disappointment was soothed by the promise of the

[1] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 142. Duke of Wellington's Supplementary Despatches, vol. i. pp. 176, 192-196.

[2] The publication of the Croker Memoirs has shown how strong George IV.'s objections were to Canning, and how anxious he was to get rid of Liverpool. See, *e.g.*, vol. i. pp. 199, 202, 208.

Governor-Generalship of India, which Lord Hastings was desirous of relinquishing. Peel, unwilling to accept the India Board, was appointed, on Sidmouth's retirement, to the Home Office; and the co-operation of the small band, which followed Lord Buckingham, was also secured by Buckingham's promotion to a dukedom; by the appointment of Charles Wynn to the Board of Control; and of his brother, Henry Wynn, as envoy to Switzerland, the salary of the post being specially raised to £4000 a year; Phillimore and Fremantle were given inferior appointments at the India Board.

Its junction with the Grenvilles.

These appointments gave the ministry a few votes, but they hardly satisfied any one. Extravagantly as Buckingham had been rewarded, his "immeasurable pretensions,"[1] as the king styled them, were still unsatisfied. Fremantle considered that he was entitled to a better berth than Phillimore, and that Wynn's appointment was "much beyond his pretensions."[2] Men who had no connection with Grenville were amazed at the price which Liverpool had agreed to pay for this slender accession of strength. "No small and insignificant party was ever bought so dear as this rump of the Grenvilles," wrote Bankes to Colchester.[3] Holland declared that "all articles are now to be had at low prices, except Grenvilles." The peculiarity of Charles Wynn's voice had won for his brother, Sir Watkin, and himself, the nicknames of "Bubble and Squeak." Erskine, alluding to this peculiarity, observed that "ministers are hard run, but they still have a squeak for it."[4]

Reinforced by the ability of Peel, and strengthened by the voting power of Buckingham's supporters, the ministry met Parliament on the 5th of February 1822. The members of

[1] The duke continued unsatisfied and insatiable. He was always urging his claims on the ministry. See on this point, for instance, Wellington's Supplementary Despatches, vol. ii. pp. 131, 142, 145, and vol. v. p. 440.

[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 206. Buckingham's *Memoirs of George IV.*, vol. i. pp. 265, 281.

[3] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 249.

[4] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 447. Canning said the only objection to making Charles Wynn Speaker was that some one would address him as Mr. Squeaker.—Moore's *Memoirs*, vol. v. p. 272.

the House of Commons were assured that the revenue was "in a course of progressive improvement;" that the estimates had "been framed with every attention to economy which the circumstances of the country will permit;" and that his Majesty had been enabled to make "a large reduction in our annual expenditure, particularly in our naval and military establishments." The assurance, which was thus given, was abundantly redeemed. The estimates for 1821 had exceeded £19,300,000. The estimates for 1822 amounted to only £17,815,000.[1] The perseverance of Hume and the distress of the agricultural classes had forced this great reduction on the ministry. Great, however, as the reduction was, the ministry desired to effect larger remissions of taxation than a mere economy in the great spending departments of the State would have enabled them to afford. The National Debt hung like a dead weight round the shoulders of the nation, and the policy of repudiating the debt was openly discussed. Men fancied that it was impracticable to go on paying the vast charge which the debt occasioned; and avowed that it would be necessary to resort to the sponge at last. Such language, five years before, would have led to the appointment of a secret committee, and to a State prosecution by the Attorney-General. But it was one thing to indict a Watson or a Hunt; it was another to prosecute a county member. The language which had been first heard in the Spa Fields was now used at county meetings, duly convened

Continued demand for repudiation.

[1] The Army estimates £7,925,000
,, Navy ,, ... 5,480,000
,, Ordnance ,, ... 1,200,000
,, Miscellaneous 1,700,000
,, Greenwich outpensions 310,000
,, Interest on Exchequer Bills . . . 1,200,000

Total £17,815,000

In addition to this £17,815,000 there was a further charge of £290,000 sinking fund of Exchequer Bills; and the scheme for converting the Navy 5 per cents., which will be mentioned later on, involved an additional charge of £2,863,000. The deficiency in the ways and means of the previous year amounted to rather more than £290,000.—*Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 148; and *Hansard*, vol. vii. p. 1415.

by the constituted authorities. Country gentlemen, whose support was invaluable to the Government, were demonstrating the folly of keeping faith with the fundholder. County members, whose political opinions were otherwise unimpeachable, were actually voting for repudiation under the cloak of debasing the currency. The ministry was unable to ignore the great issue which was thus openly raised. It had the wisdom to see the folly of either tampering with the currency or of repudiating the debt;[1] but it decided on obtaining some alleviation from its burden in a less objectionable manner.

The funded debt in 1822 amounted to rather more than £795,000,000. But this debt did not all bear the same rate of interest. The money had been borrowed at 3 per cent., 3½ per cent., 4 per cent., and 5 per cent.; and more than £153,000,000 of the amount carried interest at 5 per cent. This portion of the debt was usually known as the Navy 5 per cents. The Act, under which this money had been chiefly borrowed,[2] stipulated that the 5 per cents. should be irredeemable till £25,000,000 3 per cent. Stock had been paid off. A previous Act had directed that no portion of the 3 per cents. should be redeemed without twelve months' notice to the holders thereof.[3] The Sinking Fund had, however, discharged considerably more than £25,000,000 of the 3 per cents.; and the Government, therefore, contended that it was at liberty to proceed with the redemption of the 5 per cents. The Opposition, on the other hand, insisted that the purchases of the Sinking Fund Commissioners could not be held to constitute a redemption of the debt, and that it was, therefore, a breach of faith to proceed with the conversion of the 5 per cents.

The conversion of the 5 per cents.

The terms which the ministry offered for the redemption

[1] Repudiation, in one shape or another, found favour with an enormous number of people. A good many politicians, who would have objected to reverting to an inconvertible paper currency, were disposed to adopt silver as the standard of value, or, at any rate, to associate it with gold. Lord Althorp was inclined to adopt this remedy. J. W. Ward (Lord Dudley) was also in favour of it.

[2] 24 George III. c. 39, s. 6.

[3] 25 George II. c. 27, s. 24.

of the 5 per cent. Stock were as follows:—Every holder of £100 5 per cent. Stock was to be at liberty to receive £105 New 4 per cent. Stock. But any person objecting to this arrangement was to be paid off at *par*. The value of £100 4 per cent. Stock in February, when the offer was made, was about £98; the value of £100 5 per cent. Stock was about £105, 10*s*. The holder, therefore, who accepted the Government terms received Stock worth about £103; the holder who refused them had the alternative of accepting £100 in money. There could not, under these conditions, be much doubt about the success of the scheme. The dissentients among the fundholders were very few, and about £150,000,000 out of the whole amount of £153,000,000 was converted into a 4 per cent. Stock. The immediate gain to the country by this arrangement was very great. The interest of £150,000,000 Stock at 5 per cent. amounted to £7,500,000; the interest on £157,500,000 Stock at 4 per cent. amounted to £6,300,000. The country, in other words, saved about £1,200,000 a year by the operation;[1] but it did so by increasing the extent of its indebtedness by £7,500,000. Vansittart supplemented his scheme for converting the Navy 5 per cents. into 4 per cents. with another for the reduction of the charge which was occasioned by the various pensions granted to officers in the army, navy, and the civil service. The amount of these pensions was about £4,900,000. The sum, therefore, was a large one; it was a tempting one for a minister to deal with; and Vansittart probably imagined that his scheme for dealing with it was even more successful than his plan for converting the Navy 5 per cents. He committed himself, in consequence, to the worst of the many bad proposals with which his tenure of office is associated.

The creation of the dead weight.

The scheme which Vansittart proposed may be briefly stated. The pensions amounted to about £4,900,000. They were all granted on lives, some of them on old lives, and some portion of the amount was, therefore, constantly falling in on the death of some of the pensioners. In course of time the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. vi. p. 663. *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 127-130.

whole amount would inevitably expire, and the country would be relieved of the entire burden. It was calculated that in seven years' time the £4,900,000 would be reduced to £4,000,000; that in fifteen years' time it would be less than £3,000,000; that in twenty-three years' time it would only amount to £2,000,000; and in thirty-three years to only £1,000,000. It was calculated also that the value of a fixed annuity of £2,800,000 running for forty-five years would be about equivalent to the gross value of the various life annuities. Vansittart, therefore, proposed to conclude a bargain with some large capitalists, under which the Government should undertake to pay £2,800,000 a year for forty-five years, and the capitalists on their part should undertake to meet the claims of all the annuitants.

It was obvious that the scheme relieved the existing generation of a large charge, and that it imposed a heavy burden on the succeeding one. It was equivalent to borrowing £2,100,000 during the succeeding twelve months, and a gradually decreasing sum during the fourteen succeeding years, to be repaid, with compound interest, after the expiration of that period In other words, it was the exact reverse of the Sinking Fund, to which Vansittart still adhered. The theory of the Sinking Fund was that a sum of money accumulating at compound interest would annually redeem a constantly increasing proportion of the debt. Vansittart's new scheme practically involved the raising of annual loans, to be redeemed, with compound interest, by another generation. It naturally met with sharp criticism during its progress through Parliament. Ricardo sarcastically suggested that the pay of the army and navy should be commuted for a fixed annuity running for a period of years. Brougham, with equal sarcasm, proposed to farm off the pensioners and the ministers themselves. Hume desired to take the sum which it was necessary to borrow from the Sinking Fund. But the sarcasm and the common sense of Ricardo, Brougham, and Hume made little or no impression on the House of Commons. The great majority of the members were bewildered with a scheme which

they only partly understood, and which was imperfectly explained by its author. A good many of the country gentlemen were probably unwilling to reject a proposal which effected an immediate saving of some £2,000,000 a year; and the scheme, in consequence, was adopted by the House.

The failure and modification of Vansittart's plan.

The adoption of the scheme, however, introduced the ministry to a new difficulty. It became necessary to find some capitalists who were prepared to undertake the contract, and the largest capitalists declined to have anything to do with it. Vansittart, after forcing his proposal through the House of Commons, found to his annoyance that his project was a failure. But he did not, in consequence, abandon the whole proposal. He persuaded the House to vest in trustees an annuity of £2,800,000 a year, running for forty-five years, and to require the trustees from time to time to pay into the Treasury the sum required for the pensions and superannuations. The trustees could only make these payments by borrowing in the money market, and they were accordingly authorised either to raise money by Exchequer Bills or to sell portions of the annuity. The scheme, in its amended shape, was perhaps less objectionable than the original plan; but its objections, if less grave, were much more plain. It was no longer possible to disguise the fact that the new trustees were appointed to discharge a duty which was the exact reverse of that which the commissioners of the Sinking Fund were performing. One set of trustees was avowedly contracting loans accumulating at compound interest; the other set was endeavouring to reduce the debt by the action of compound interest. It was in vain, however, that Hume proposed that the sum, required in excess of the fixed amount of £2,800,000 during the next fifteen years, should be taken from the Sinking Fund. No one attempted to meet his arguments, but hardly any one offered to support his views. Hume's proposal was rejected, and Vansittart's complicated arrangement received the sanction of the legislature.[1]

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. pp. 737 758, 782–785. *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, pp. 130–137. Lord King, in the House of Lords, moved a long preamble to

A considerable reduction had thus been effected in the expenditure of the country. The conversion of the Navy 5 per cents. had occasioned a saving of £1,200,000 a year; at the cost of a further charge, the fixed annuity, or the "dead weight annuity," as it was termed, had enabled the minister to make an immediate reduction in the expenditure of more than £2,000,000. But the clamour for economy, which agricultural distress had promoted, was so great that Vansittart was not satisfied with these reductions. The dead weight annuity had reduced the existing charge of pensions and superannuations. Vansittart determined that the members of the civil service should, in future, themselves provide a portion of the cost of their own pensions. The superannuations granted to retired members of the service averaged, it was found, about 10 per cent. of the sum paid in salaries to civil servants. Vansittart proposed that each member of the service should pay a tax of 5 per cent. on his salary, which should assist to defray the cost of superannuation.[1] Officers of the royal household, and offices held at the pleasure of the Crown, including those of the ministers, were at the same time subjected to a tax of 10 per cent. It was estimated that these reductions would effect a saving of £373,000 a year.[2]

Tax on civil service salaries.

Great as were the reductions which had thus been made, the Opposition was not satisfied. It attacked the salaries of the lay Lords of the Admiralty; it impugned the necessity of employing two Postmasters-General; it denounced the Presidency of the Board of Control as a sinecure; it demanded the revision of the diplomatic expen-

Demand for further economies.

the bill, concluding by enacting "that a series of loans shall be raised in a circuitous manner, and that the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury shall have power to lend to themselves, and to borrow of themselves, and to conceal the whole transaction from themselves, and from all other ignorant and well-disposed persons." Lord Harrowby seems to have taken the joke seriously.—*Hansard*, vol. vii. p. 1397.

[1] Persons with less than £100 a year were to pay only £2, 10s. per cent.; and persons enjoying offices whose salaries were marked for reduction were to pay £10 per cent., or the portion of the salary to be hereafter reduced.—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. vi. pp. 1015–1039.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 139.

diture; and it insisted on the reduction of the special salary which had been awarded to Henry Wynn, the envoy to the Swiss Cantons. In some of these debates the ministry succeeded in resisting the arguments of the economists. Canning exerted his eloquence to prove that the Presidency of the Board of Control, an office which he had himself occupied, was a hard-worked situation.[1] Londonderry declared that, if the motion on the diplomatic expenditure were carried, he would retire from office. The eloquence of Canning insured the ministers a majority on the one subject; the threat of Londonderry gave them a majority on the other. But the ministry was less successful in defending the salaries of the junior Lords of the Admiralty, or in proving that two Postmasters-General were necessary for the management of the Post Office. The reduction of the Admiralty vote was carried by 182 votes to 128; and ministers, finding themselves in a minority, abolished the two junior Lordships. The abolition of one of the offices of Postmaster-General was carried, on the 2nd of May, by 216 votes to 201. Lord Salisbury was immediately dismissed from the office; and ministers explained that the reduction in England would be followed by a similar reduction in Ireland.[2]

The ministry was thus compelled to attend to the almost universal demand for retrenchment; it was equally unable to ignore the general wish for a reduction of taxation. At the commencement of the session it announced an intention of remitting the additional duty on malt, which had formed the subject of so fierce a contest in the preceding year. The ministry probably hoped that the remission of a tax, which was thought to fall with peculiar severity on the agricultural classes, would satisfy their demand for retrenchment. But the partial concession only whetted the appetite of the taxpayers for further reductions. A motion, made on the 28th of February, for the gradual repeal of the salt tax was only defeated by a majority of four.[3] So narrow a division

Reduction of taxation.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vi. pp. 1120–1165.

[2] Ibid., vol. vi. p. 881; vol. vii. p. 312. *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 141-147.

[3] 169 votes to 165. *Hansard*, N.S., vol. vi. p. 860.

compelled the ministry again to give way. The duty on salt was reduced from 15*s.* to 2*s.* a bushel; the duty on leather was reduced by one half; the tonnage duty on shipping was abolished; and the Irish window and hearth taxes were repealed. The various reforms of the Government had effected an immediate reduction in the expenditure of the country of £3,673,000 a year. The repeal of taxation relieved the taxpayers of an annual burden of £3,500,000.[1]

Such were the leading reforms either introduced by Vansittart or forced on him in 1822. Excluding the charges on the Consolidated Fund, the expenditure of the year was fixed at £17,815,000; the available revenue was less than £5,000,000. £7,500,000 of the deficit was raised by a loan on the Sinking Fund, the residue by the issue of Exchequer Bills. In announcing these arrangements, Vansittart undertook to constitute the Sinking Fund on a fresh basis in the following session. Long before the next session, however, an event occurred which led to his own retirement from the Exchequer, and which ultimately altered the history of England.

The session had been protracted to an unusually late period. Parliament was not prorogued till the 6th of August. The Opposition laid the blame of the delay on the Government; the ministry attributed it to the proceedings of the Opposition. The warm discussions, which had again and again been renewed, had proved particularly harassing to ministers, and the brunt of

[1] The amounts were as follows:—

1. *Reductions of Expenditure.*

By conversion of Navy 5 per cents.	£1,200,000
,, dead weight annuities	2,100,000
,, duty on offices	373,000
Total	£3,673,000

2. *Reductions of Taxation.*

By additional malt duty	£1,500,000
,, salt tax	1,300,000
,, leather duty	300,000
,, duty on tonnage	150,000
,, Irish hearth and window tax	250,000
Total	£3,500,000

Ann. Reg., 1822, p. 148.

the battle had as usual fallen on Londonderry. The alterations which had been made in the composition of the Government during the previous autumn had not relieved him from much labour. Peel, in weakly health, had done little beyond attending to the immediate duties of his own department, and Charles Wynn was universally admitted to have proved a failure. In these circumstances Londonderry had an unusual strain cast upon him. Weakened by an attack of gout, he complained, as the session wore on, of overwork. His usually clear handwriting became almost illegible in June and July; and on one occasion, in the House, he disclaimed all knowledge of a subject which had been just carefully explained to him.[1] His wife and his friends, however, felt no great anxiety about him. At the close of the session, he prepared for a journey to Vienna, where the memorable Congress of 1822 was about to assemble; and he gave a large party at Cray on the Saturday preceding the prorogation. The wine was excellent, the company in good humour, Londonderry in the highest spirits.[2] On the following Tuesday Wellington had occasion to see his colleague at his office, and thought him "very low." A Cabinet was held on the Wednesday for the purpose of settling Londonderry's instructions for the congress; but Londonderry took no part in the discussion, and was evidently "out of sorts." On the Friday he was so ill that concealment of his real state was no longer possible. Some anonymous letters which had been addressed to the Treasury preyed on his mind; his diseased imagination conjured up disclosures impugning his moral character; he fancied that his own friends shunned him; that his servants had ordered up his horses from Cray to London, to enable him to escape; and that he had no alternative but to fly the country. Wellington begged Dr. Bankhead, a medical man, to see him. The king, who had an interview with him at the levée, was alarmed at his mental condition;

[1] Alison's *Castlereagh*, vol. iii. p. 178. Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 193, note; and *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Chron., p. 627.

[2] It was, however, on this occasion that, on Arbuthnot calling out "Lord Londonderry," he jumped up as if in expectation of something serious.—Greville, vol. i. p. 54.

and Lady Londonderry concluded that her husband was on the eve of a brain fever. The drastic remedies which Bankhead at once applied relieved for the moment the acuter symptoms. Londonderry was well enough to drive down to his house at Cray, though he made Bankhead promise to follow him. Bankhead, anticipating the catastrophe which ultimately occurred, desired that all razors and knives might be removed from Londonderry's reach. His servants, unfortunately, either overlooked or forgot a small penknife in their master's dressing-room, and with this knife the unhappy minister, early on the morning of the 12th of August, severed the carotid artery of his neck, and almost instantly expired.[1]

The death of Lord Londonderry.

The death of Londonderry, at the early age of fifty-one, was one of the most important events in the history of the present century. For ten years his had been the leading voice in the counsels of England. For ten years his had been the chief responsibility for the legislation which had been adopted. He had attained a position which perhaps has no parallel in the annals of his country. It was hardly an exaggeration to say that he had been the arbiter of Europe; and he was able to correspond, on terms of comparative intimacy, with emperors and kings. No training could have been worse for a constitutional minister. Londonderry's "head was turned by emperors, kings, and congresses, and he resolved that the country which he represented should play as conspicuous a part as any other in the political dramas which were acted on the Continent."[2] His foreign policy was, in consequence, unfortunate; his domestic policy, which resembled it, was disastrous. Londonderry regarded a Radical with the feelings with which a Francis or an Alexander regarded a Carbonaro. He was prepared to suppress discontent at home with the weapons which had previously been only employed by continental monarchs. He died. The effects of his death on the foreign policy of this country will be more properly

Effects of his death.

[1] Wellington's Suppl. Despatches, vol. i. pp. 251–259. *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, p. 432.

[2] Greville, vol. i. p. 53.

related in a subsequent chapter. Its effects on home politics were revolutionary. His decease was not the mere death of a man: it gave the death-blow to a system. Tory government, in the old-fashioned sense of the phrase, ceased with Londonderry. A monument had not been erected to his memory before the reaction began.

At the period of Londonderry's death, however, these consequences were not perceptible. Liverpool's Administration seemed to have sustained an almost irreparable loss in the death of a statesman whose coolness, whose courage, whose good sense, and whose agreeable manners had won the devotion of his friends and the respect of his opponents. No member of the Tory party seemed capable of replacing him. In ability Canning was more than his equal; but to Canning's appointment objections could be urged which seemed almost insuperable. A section of the Tory party, indeed, desired his appointment, because they recognised that he was the only possible leader; but the bulk of the Tories regarded him as a man "who had deserted all alliances he had ever made,"[1] and with whom it was both foolish and undignified to combine. The antipathy of the Tories was, however, slight in comparison with the dislike of the king. There seemed no reason for believing that George IV. would be more ready to admit Canning to his counsels in the autumn of 1822 than in the autumn of 1821. Nor, indeed, was it at all certain that Canning himself would be disposed to take office. At the moment at which Londonderry died he was on his way to Liverpool to say farewell to his constituents.[2] He had accepted the most brilliant situation which any subject of the British Crown can fill, and he might naturally hope to find ample room for his talents and his ambition as Governor-General of India, and to be spared from the constant annoyances and disappointments which had been the unvarying lot of his political life at home. The month of August passed, and Canning heard nothing from the ministry. It was decided that Wellington should fill Londonderry's place at Vienna, but no arrangements were concluded for disposing

[1] Plumer Ward, vol. i. p. 347. [2] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. pp. 114-124.

of the seals of the Foreign Office. Canning quietly continued his preparations for leaving England.

The delay which took place in filling up Lord Londonderry's situation was partly due to the king's absence from London when that statesman died. Two days before Londonderry's death the king embarked on board his yacht in the Thames and set sail for Leith. He arrived there on the 14th of August, and he learned the news of Londonderry's death in Edinburgh. Liverpool, in acquainting him with the circumstance, suggested that no arrangements should be made for disposing of the vacant office until after the king's return to England, and his Majesty readily accepted a proposal which even temporarily postponed the hateful necessity of a possible application to Canning. The weeks slipped away in pleasant *fêtes*. The king had the satisfaction of displaying his shapely legs beneath a Stuart kilt, and the mortification of observing that his own well-studied toilet was made ridiculous by the portly figure of Sir William Curtis in the same garb. He had the satisfaction of inspiring his Scottish subjects with loyalty to his person, and of gratifying Sir Walter Scott by rigidly attending to the complicated arrangements which the enthusiasm and antiquarian knowledge of the poet suggested to honour his Majesty's reception. But the evil day could not be indefinitely postponed. At the commencement of September the king returned to England; and, laying aside kilt and tartan, was compelled to listen to the proposals of his ministers. He had written from Scotland to beg that the arrangements respecting India might on no account be impeded, "as it is my decision that they should remain final and unalterable;" [1] and he had the mortification of ascertaining that the Cabinet was unanimous in desiring to change this "final and unalterable decision." The king resisted; and it required all the influence of Wellington and the Prime Minister to induce him to give way. He

George IV.'s visit to Scotland.

[1] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 195. The king sent the letter to Lord Liverpool by Peel, "who"—so said his Majesty, five years afterwards—"went up to town with Mrs. P., his eyes being bad, and he wearing a low green shade." See the account in Wellington's Despatches vol. iii. p. 633. Dickens might have envied the description.

conceived that Canning had offended him, and that his honour required that he should resent the offence. Wellington had the dexterity to reply that the "honour of your Majesty consists in acts of mercy and grace."[1] The king, who probably desired some good reason for an inevitable concession, appropriated the idea, and told Liverpool that he was "aware that the brightest ornament of his Crown is the power of extending grace and favour to a subject who may have incurred his displeasure," and that he "therefore permits Lord Liverpool to propose Mr. Canning's readmission into the Government."[2] The king's letter had, however, a very different effect from what his Majesty intended. Canning was indignant at the king's presuming to talk of forgiving him, and was with difficulty dissuaded from sending a most violent reply. Happily for the future of the country, he was prevailed upon to destroy his offensive answer, and to despatch to Liverpool another letter, "full of gratitude, duty, and aquiescence."[3]

Canning accepted the post which Londonderry's death had vacated. He undertook, at the same time, the lead of the House of Commons. He had not been in office a fortnight before he assumed, "even in the presence of Lord Liverpool, the tone and authority of Premier."[4] His Parliamentary talents were so much greater than those which any of his colleagues enjoyed, that such a result was almost inevitable. It was equally inevitable that he should desire to strengthen his position in the Cabinet by the introduction of his own friends. From the moment at which Canning accepted office other changes in the administration seemed certain, and negotiations with this view were almost immediately undertaken. The party in the Cabinet, which was the most opposed to the new minister, was the triumvirate composed of Sidmouth and Sidmouth's two nominees, Bathurst and Vansittart. The personages in the ministry who were most immediately associated with his fortunes were Robinson, the

Canning accepts the Foreign Office.

[1] Wellington's Suppl. Despatches, vol. i. p. 276.
[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 200. [3] Greville, vol. i. p. 58.
[4] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 385.

President of the Board of Trade, and Huskisson, the First Commissioner of Land Revenue. Robinson was already in the Cabinet, Huskisson had never been admitted to any important office. Canning, in the first instance, endeavoured to open the Board of Control and the Cabinet to Huskisson. He imagined that the Speaker might be persuaded to go as Governor-General to India; that Charles Wynn might accept the Speakership; and that the India Board, with its emoluments and its patronage, might be opened to Huskisson. The negotiation failed through the ambition of Buckingham. The duke conceived that his dignity required that one of his own immediate friends should be in the Cabinet, and insisted, in the event of Wynn's appointment to the Speakership, on his own admission to it.[1] Buckingham's pretensions were intolerably great; but his influence was as paramount as his claims. Ministers refrained from complying with his demands, but they shrank from incurring his displeasure. They were consequently compelled to find room for Canning's friends by the removal of Sidmouth's. Sidmouth himself had retained, since the previous autumn, his seat in the Cabinet without office. Bathurst, since the same period, had filled the sinecure situation of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He was now prevailed on to retire by the promise of a pension of £900 a year to his wife, with reversion to his daughters; and Vansittart was persuaded to exchange his own situation in the Exchequer for Bathurst's office and a peerage. Robinson was appointed to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, which Vansittart's removal vacated. Huskisson was promoted to the Board of Trade, with a promise that he should ultimately be admitted to the Cabinet;[2] and Arbuthnot, who had busily discharged for some years the laborious duties of Secretary to the Treasury, was gratified by promotion to Huskisson's office. Liverpool probably imagined that these arrangements had satisfied every one. He soon found that in satisfying Canning he had

Other changes in the Ministry.

[1] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 11. Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 207.
[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 210.

offended other persons. Wallace, the member for Weymouth, was Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and Wallace resented his supercession by Huskisson. To satisfy Wallace Wellington's brother, Lord Maryborough, was removed from the Mint to the Buckhounds—was "sent to the dogs," as he himself bitterly complained—and Wallace was promoted to the Mastership of the Mint.[1]

The public generally was well satisfied with the new appointments, but hardly realised the extent of the change which had been made. It was impossible to foresee that a complete revolution in foreign and domestic politics would result from the reconstruction of a Tory Cabinet. Among the grievances which formed the subject of remonstrance and complaint, both in Parliament and out of doors, nothing was more anomalous, more unfortunate, and more indefensible than the Criminal Code which disgraced the Statute Book. During the earlier years of the present century the punishment of death could legally be inflicted for more than 200 offences. It was a capital offence to pick a man's pocket; it was a capital offence to steal five shillings from a shop; it was a capital offence to steal a fish; it was a capital offence to rob a rabbit-warren; it was a capital offence to cut down a tree; it was a capital offence to personate a Greenwich pensioner; it was a capital offence to harbour an offender against the Revenue Acts. It would be possible to extend almost indefinitely the list of offences for which men could be legally hanged at the commencement of the present century. For some years the state of the law had attracted the attention of humane men. Soon after his entry into Parliament, Romilly devoted a portion of the long vacation to the subject; and, in 1808, he brought in a bill to repeal an old Act of Elizabeth which constituted stealing from the person a capital offence. Plumer, who was Solicitor-General at the time, objected that, if the Act of Elizabeth were repealed, it would be no longer possible to inflict more than seven years' transportation on a pickpocket. The grim argument, gravely pro-

The Criminal Code.

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 293.

pounded, was successful. Romilly's bill was recast. Transportation for life was made the punishment for the pickpocket, and the bill, thus altered, was allowed to pass. Romilly had the satisfaction of feeling that it was no longer possible to hang man or child for picking another person's pocket.

Two years afterwards, in 1810, Romilly renewed his humane efforts. He moved for leave to introduce three bills—one to repeal an Act of William III., which made it a capital offence to steal five shillings from a shop; another to repeal an Act of Anne, which made it a capital offence to steal forty shillings from a dwelling-house; a third, to repeal an Act of George II., which made it a capital offence to steal forty shillings from a vessel on a navigable river. The second of these bills was thrown out by a majority of only two in a small House of sixty-eight members; the third of them was abandoned; the first was suffered to pass the House of Commons. A landlord's Parliament decided that, if concession were to be made, it should be made by the shopkeeping class. The country gentlemen might, however, have spared their apprehensions. The bill reached the House of Lords and was rejected, on the second reading, by a majority of thirty-one votes. Ellenborough and the Chancellor declared that the bill, which had been passed two years previously, had tended to increase the number of pickpockets; and their arguments prevailed in the small House which attended the debate. Amongst the thirty-one peers who voted against the bill were seven prelates. The seven dignitaries of the Church who thought it consistent with the principles of their religion to hang a man for shoplifting deserve to have their names preserved. They were Manners Sutton, Archbishop of Canterbury; Randolph, Bishop of London; Fisher, Bishop of Salisbury; Dampier, Bishop of Ely; Luxmore, Bishop of Hereford; Sparke, Bishop of Chester; and Porter, an Irish Bishop.

Undiscouraged by his disheartening failure, Romilly, early in 1811, reintroduced his three bills. Soon after their introduction he presented two petitions from the owners of bleaching grounds in Ireland and England, stating that their property,

while lying out to be bleached, was subject to continual depredations; that, from the lenity of prosecutors and the reluctance of juries to convict, the law which punished the offence with death secured impunity for the offenders; and praying that the Acts which made these offences capital might be repealed. Soon after presenting these petitions he brought in two additional bills to give effect to their prayer. Notwithstanding the opposition of the Government, he had the satisfaction of carrying all five bills through the House of Commons. But his satisfaction was only short-lived. Three of the five bills were thrown out in the House of Lords. The two which related to stealing from bleaching grounds were suffered to pass. After three years of labour Romilly was able to reflect that it was no longer a capital offence to pick a man's pocket or to steal goods from a bleaching ground. In every other respect the horrible Criminal Code remained unaltered.

Romilly gained a slight additional success in 1812. An old Act of Elizabeth made it a capital offence for soldiers or mariners to beg without a pass from a magistrate or their commanding officer. Romilly persuaded Parliament to repeal this Act. But its repeal was not effected without one characteristic circumstance. The bill, as it passed the Commons, recited that it was highly expedient that the Act of Elizabeth should be repealed. Ellenborough was willing to repeal the Act, but he was not willing to admit that it was "highly" expedient to do so. In deference to his suggestion the word "highly" was struck out of the preamble, and the bill, with this amendment, was permitted to pass. No other step was taken in 1812 to reform the Criminal Code. In 1813 Romilly again introduced a bill to repeal the Act of William III. which made it a capital offence to steal five shillings from a shop. The bill was again permitted to pass the Commons, but was rejected, on the second reading, in the Lords. Only fifteen peers took the trouble to vote for it, while twenty-six voted against it. Two princes of the blood, the Dukes of York and Cumberland, and five prelates, the Archbishop of Tuam; Cornwall, Bishop of Worcester; Luxmore, Bishop of Hereford;

Jackson, Bishop of Oxford; and Law, Bishop of Chester, were among the twenty-six. Romilly was so discouraged by this defeat that he did not reintroduce his bill till the session of 1816. The bill again passed the House of Commons, but was rejected by the House of Lords without a division. The Parliament, however, which refused to make this slight alteration in the Criminal Code added another to the long list of offences punishable with death. It was made a capital offence for persons, riotously assembled, to destroy any of the machinery employed in collieries.[1]

In 1818 Romilly again introduced his bill. He was able to show that, from 1805 to 1817, 655 persons had been indicted for stealing five shillings from a shop. One hundred and thirteen of these had been sentenced to death, but the sentence had not been carried into effect on a single offender. The law, in short, was an obsolete relic of a barbarous age; but the House of Lords still clung with unbending pertinacity to obsolete relics. Romilly's bill again passed the Commons, and was rejected without a division in the Lords.[2] The time was, however, arriving when the House of Lords was to realise the impracticability of retaining old laws and old customs which had no other recommendation than their age. In the good old days, which old-fashioned Tories were fond of extolling, a man had been permitted to "appeal" a felon who had done him wrong before the Court of Common Pleas. If, for instance, a murder had been committed, the wife or next heir of the murdered man might "appeal" the suspected murderer. The appeal had to be brought within a year and a day of the commission of the felony. The king's prerogative of pardon did not extend to an appeal case; and the appeal might actually be brought after the acquittal of the suspected person on his formal trial. The appeal was ordinarily tried before the Court of Common Pleas; but the appellee was permitted to deliver to the appellant "wager of battel." The

[1] Romilly, vol. ii. pp. 229, 235, 238, 243, 252, 282, 303, 315, 325, 333, 341, 362, 383, 385, 390; vol. iii. pp. 9, 19, 78, 95, 219, 260.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxvii. p. 610; vol. xxxviii. p. 1185.

issue of the appeal in that case was determined by the respective strength of appellant and appellee. The judges of the Court of Common Pleas attended in their scarlet robes in some convenient place. A baton, an ell long, and a leather shield were delivered to each of the combatants, and the parties thus armed were permitted to cudgel each other from sunrise to star-rising, or till the weaker of them uttered the disgraceful word "Craven."

Appeals and "wagers of battel."

No such spectacle, however, had been witnessed since the days of Elizabeth, and mankind had forgotten this custom of "the good old times," when they were startled by the prospect of its revival. Abraham Thornton was tried at Warwick for the murder of Mary Ashford. The jury acquitted him; but the verdict was thought unsatisfactory, and Mary's brother William "appealed" Thornton. Thornton, being the stronger man of the two, cast down his glove in open court and demanded the wager of battel. The judges, surprised by the novel application, took time to consider it. They ultimately decided that they were bound to give the accused person the right which he claimed. It seemed probable that Thornton and Ashford would cudgel each other the livelong day before the judges of the Court of Common Pleas. Ashford, however, had the discretion to reflect that the strength of his muscles did not correspond with the virtue of his cause, and declined the encounter. But, though Ashford failed to screw up his courage to the sticking-point, the wager of battel had been solemnly claimed, and solemnly conceded. The ministry could not venture to afford others the opportunity of imitating the example which had been set them, and the Attorney-General was accordingly instructed to introduce a bill to abolish appeals and wagers of battel. The bill, of course, passed. A few politicians attempted to distinguish between the appeals and the wagers of battel, and quoted the high authority of Holt to show that the right of appeal restricted the prerogative of the Crown. The Common Council of London petitioned with the same view. But Parliament properly refused to listen to these remonstrances

or to retain a solitary remnant of an obsolete system. The Attorney-General's bill passed through all its stages and became law.[1]

Before the bill which was thus passed was introduced Romilly, the first champion of Criminal Law reform, died. His exertions had almost uniformly failed; but they had excited the admiration of the best of his contemporaries. While Romilly was endeavouring to reform the Criminal Code, Mackintosh was acting as a criminal judge at Bombay. In opposition to the ordinary course he never, till the eve of his retirement, inflicted the punishment of death upon any one. "Two hundred thousand men," he said, in his last charge, "have been governed for seven years without a capital punishment and without any increase of crimes. I have no doubt," he went on, "of the right of society to inflict the punishment of death on enormous crimes. I consider it as a mere modification of the right of self-defence. I do not even presume in this place to give an opinion regarding the attempt which has been made by one, whom I consider as among the wisest and most virtuous men of the present age, to render the letter of our penal law more conformable to its practice. My only object is to show that no evil has hitherto resulted from the exercise of judicial discretion in this court. I speak with less reserve, because the present sessions are likely to afford a test which will determine whether I have been actuated by weakness or by firmness." The test was afforded. Two days after the delivery of his charge Mackintosh sentenced an English soldier to death for the cruel murder of a poor Hindoo.[2]

The death of Romilly and the views of Mackintosh.

Experience, then, had convinced Mackintosh that the infliction of capital punishment is unnecessary except on rare occasions and for brutal crimes. The study of the French Criminal Code had confirmed this conviction. "The crimes,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 415, 734; vol. xl. p. 1203. Kerr's *Blackstone*, vol. iii. p. 350; vol. iv. pp. 367–370. Hughes' *History of England*, vol. vi. p. 363.

[2] Mackintosh, vol. ii. pp. 34, 110, 116.

not political," so he wrote in his diary, "punishable capitally are coining, murder of an aggravated sort, such as parricide, infanticide (to which I object), poisoning, assassination, and killing in the act of perpetrating any other crime, and theft committed in the night by two or more persons, armed, breaking into a dwelling-house, and threatening to employ their arms. . . . The Code exhibits a sad and shameful contrast to that of England. While the English Parliament rejects Romilly's bill, Napoleon is evidently solicitous to make every reform in the administration or legislature that is compatible with his own authority." [1]

Mackintosh becomes a Criminal Law reformer.

Such were the opinions which Mackintosh had formed while executing the duties of a criminal judge in India. Suddenly and unexpectedly, after Romilly's deplorable death, he found himself the champion of Criminal Law reform. Romilly was the more earnest and industrious of the two men, but Mackintosh was the bolder and abler champion. Romilly had wasted his life in attempting to destroy a cruel system in detail; Mackintosh at once decided to attack it as a whole. There were more than two hundred offences in the Statute Book for which capital punishment might be inflicted; but there were only twenty-five offences for which any one had suffered death during the preceding three-quarters of a century. It was obvious, therefore, that either the law which sanctioned capital punishment was wrong, or that the practice which prevented its enforcement was mistaken. The practice ought to be assimilated to the law, or the law brought into accord with the practice. There were, argued Mackintosh, three different classes of offences for which capital punishment might in theory be inflicted. The first of these classes embraced murder and similar offences against the person; the second of them arson, highway robbery, and piracy. But there was a third class of offences, "of the most frivolous and fantastic description, against which the punishment of death is denounced by the law, though that punishment is never at present executed—

[1] Mackintosh, vol. ii. pp. 56, 57.

such as cutting down a hop-vine or cutting the head of a fish-pond, or being found on the highway with the face blackened. It is undoubtedly true that for the last seventy years no capital punishment has been inflicted for such offences; the statutes denouncing them are therefore needless; and I trust that I shall never live to see the day when any member of this House shall rise and maintain that a punishment avowedly needless ought to be continued."

Mackintosh, after stating these arguments, proposed the appointment of a select committee to consider so much of the Criminal Law as relates to capital punishments. The proposal was in many respects made at an opportune moment. The administration had been gradually sinking in popular estimation, and the majority by which it was supported was neither so large nor so docile as it had been. Castlereagh did not venture to meet Mackintosh's motion with a direct negative. On the previous evening he had obtained the appointment of a committee to inquire into the state and description of gaols and into the best method of providing for the reformation, custody, and punishment of offenders. He met Mackintosh's motion by proposing that this committee should have power to report on the whole subject of the Criminal Code. He desired, in short, what Charles Wynn called "a hodge-podge committee on Penal Laws, prisons, Botany Bay, and forgery." It was not the first occasion on which a minister had endeavoured to strangle an inconvenient proposal by loading it with irrelevant matter. But the expedient did not save the ministry from a damaging defeat. Mackintosh's motion was carried by 147 votes to 128, and the select committee which he had desired was accordingly appointed.[1]

Mackintosh's first victory.

This great victory—the first great victory which the reformers achieved in this country—was won on the 2nd of March 1819. The session was not two months old, and the committee had consequently ample time for its investigations.

[1] *Hansard* vol. xxxix. pp. 740–759, 778–846. Buckingham's *Regency*, vol. ii. p. 323.

Before Parliament was prorogued it was enabled to present an elaborate and instructive report. It was able to show that the graver classes of offences were not increasing in a greater ratio than the population, but that the vast and lamentable growth of crime was due to an extraordinary increase in the minor offences. The punishment of death, adjudged to these offences, had not in any way prevented their multiplication. It would have been strange indeed if it had done so, for the extreme penalty of the law had not, in these cases, been inflicted for generations. "It has sometimes been said," so the report went on, "that the abolition of penal laws, which have fallen into disuse, is of little advantage to the community. Your committee consider this opinion an error. They forbear to enlarge on the striking remark of Lord[1] Bacon, that all such laws weaken and disarm the other parts of the criminal system. The frequent occurrence of the unexecuted threat of death in a criminal code tends to rob that punishment of all its terrors, and to enervate the general authority of the Government and the laws. The multiplication of this threat in the laws of England has brought on them, and on the nation, a character of harshness and cruelty, which evidence of a mild administration of them will not entirely remove. Repeal silences the objection. Reasoning founded on a lenient exercise of authority, whatever its force may be, is not calculated to efface a general and deep impression." These arguments led the committee to recommend the unconditional repeal of the statutes imposing capital punishment on acts which were either innocuous or which were capable of punishment as misdemeanours at the common law.[2] They induced

[1] The committee is responsible for this error.

[2] There were twelve distinct offences of this character, which it is worth while to recapitulate, to show the trivial acts for which a person could lawfully be executed sixty years ago. They were:—

1. Egyptians remaining within the country one month.
2. Notorious thieves in Cumberland and Northumberland.
3. Being armed and disguised in any forest, park, &c.
4. Being armed and disguised in any warren.
5. Being armed and disguised in any high road, open heath, common, or down.

them to recommend that imprisonment or transportation should in future be the punishment of fifteen other offences, which they considered of "a malignant and dangerous nature," but which did not justify the forfeiture of the offender's life.[1] In addition to these recommendations, they proposed to revive Romilly's three bills repealing the punishment of death for privately stealing five shillings from a shop, forty shillings from a dwelling-house, or forty shillings from a vessel in a navigable river. They suggested also that the laws relating to forgery should be methodised and reformed. So long "as the smaller notes of the Bank of England shall continue to constitute the principal part of the circulating medium of the kingdom the forgery of these notes may remain a capital offence; but private forgeries, and the possession of forged notes, might be sufficiently punished either by transportation or by imprisonment, with hard labour."

The inquiries of the committee necessarily occupied the

6. Unlawfully hunting, killing, or stealing deer.
7. Robbing warrens.
8. Stealing or taking any fish out of any river or pond.
9. Hunting in his Majesty's forests or chases.
10. Breaking down the head of a fish-pond.
11. Being disguised within the Mint.
12. Injuring Westminster Bridge, or other bridges.

[1] These fifteen offences were:—

1. Taking away any maid, widow, or wife, for the sake of her fortune.
2. Acknowledging or procuring any fine, recovery, &c.
3. Helping to the recovery of stolen goods.
4. Maliciously killing or wounding cattle.
5. Cutting down or destroying trees.
6. Bankrupts not surrendering.
7. Bankrupts concealing or embezzling.
8. Cutting down the banks of any river.
9. Destroying any fence, lock, sluice, &c.
10. Making a false entry in a marriage register.
11. Sending threatening letters.
12. Destroying bank, &c., of Bedford Level.
13. Personating out-pensioners of Greenwich Hospital.
14. Maliciously cutting serges.
15. Harbouring offenders against the Revenue Act.

It is a striking proof of the character which severe legislation had imprinted on the age that Mackintosh's committee should have described these offences as malignant and dangerous. The report of the committee will be found in *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Chron., p. 336.

greater portion of the session of 1819. In 1820, notwithstanding the lamentable circumstances attendant on the queen's return, Mackintosh found leisure to follow up the committee's conclusions. On the 9th of May he moved for leave to bring in six bills to give effect to its recommendations. Three of these bills passed through Parliament. One of the three repealed the Act which made it a capital offence to steal five shillings from a shop, but, in deference to the Chancellor's suggestion, retained the punishment of death when the goods stolen exceeded £15 in value. Another of these bills, relating to some of the nominal offences which the committee considered innocuous, was also passed. The third dealt with some of the graver offences, which Mackintosh's committee proposed to punish with transportation or imprisonment, and became law.[1] The three other bills, repealing the statutes which imposed the penalty of death on offenders privately stealing forty shillings from a dwelling-house or from a boat on a navigable river, and which amended the laws respecting forgery, were not passed. Mackintosh re-introduced these bills early in 1821. The two former of them passed through the Commons, but were rejected, as they always had been, in the Lords.[2] The third was the subject of keen debate in the Lower House of Parliament, and never reached the Upper House.

Mackintosh's proceedings in 1820.

And in 1821.

Forgery on the Bank of England was one of the most prevalent crimes which disgraced this country during the earlier years of the present century. The prevalence of the crime seemed the more serious because it was of very recent origin. In 1797 only one person had been convicted of this offence. During the next three years the convictions for it had averaged seventeen a year;

Forgery.

[1] See *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. pp. 227–237; vol. ii. pp. 491–496, 524–527. The Chancellor insisted on retaining the punishment of death for persons assembled with their faces blackened and disguised, and in consequence the 9 Geo. I. c. 22, which imposed the punishment of death on the offences numbered 3 to 10 in the first category in the preceding note, was not repealed. The three Acts passed were the 1 Geo. IV. c. 115, 116, and 117.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. v. p. 1231.

from 1801 to 1805 they had risen to the annual average of twenty-six; from 1806 to 1810 the average had increased to thirty-two; from 1811 to 1815 it had further increased to forty-seven; and from 1816 to 1820 two hundred persons had, on an average, been annually convicted of forgery on the Bank of England.[1] Before 1797, when cash payments were first suspended, "forgery of bank-notes," said Mackintosh, "was the rarest of all criminal cases. In the last seven years [before 1818] not less than one hundred and one persons had suffered death for this crime. Executions for forgery now stood at the head of the list of capital punishments; they were far more numerous than executions for murder or for burglary; they were double all the executions for robbery, and much greater than executions for all other offences taken together."[2] In 1817 the Bank spent no less than £30,000 in prosecuting offenders for forgery.[3] There was an eloquence about these figures which was capable of startling the timid legislators of 1820; but there was one circumstance about them which added to their gravity. Nothing was so common as the detection of the utterer of a forged note; but nothing was so uncommon as the detection of the actual forger. It was well known that the fabricators of bank-notes resided in certain localities with which the police were acquainted, but they were nevertheless permitted to carry on their trade with impunity.[4] Their trade was comparatively easy. The bank-note was of the simplest character; its imitation required little skill or capital. In 1818 Mackintosh had moved for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the means of more effectually preventing these forgeries. Vansittart, who probably disliked select committees originating with the Opposition, succeeded in substituting a royal commission for a committee. Some of the most eminent scientific men of the day

[1] The figures from which these averages are taken will be found in *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 86.

[2] Mackintosh, in House of Commons, the 13th of May 1818.—*Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. p. 672.

[3] Ibid., p. 673.

[4] Report of Royal Commission on Forgery of Bank-notes.—*Ann. Reg.* 1819, Chron., p. 311.

served on the commission. The commissioners reported at the commencement of 1819. They mainly relied for the prevention of forgery on the substitution of a more elaborate note for that which was already in use. If their expectations were not disappointed, the Bank would produce "a specimen of great ingenuity in the fabric of the paper, of great excellence in the workmanship, and of a very peculiar invention and difficult machinery in the art of printing." Clumsy workmanship had encouraged imitators. Clever workmanship was to baffle crime.[1]

The report of the commission was published in the commencement of 1819. Mackintosh's committee must necessarily have had the commissioners' recommendations before it when it agreed to propose the reform of the laws relating to forgery. The prevalence of the offence had induced the committee to recommend the retention of death as the punishment of forgery on the Bank of England. The same reason induced Mackintosh to follow the committee's suggestions. But the concession, which Mackintosh thus made, proved fatal to his measure. The great principle, on which Romilly originally stood, and which Mackintosh had adopted, was that severe punishments, which from their very nature could be only occasionally enforced, were less efficacious than moderate ones, which could be regularly executed. The retention of death, as a punishment for one particular forgery, was only justifiable on the ground that death, after all, was a greater deterrent than transportation or imprisonment. If the Bank of England were entitled to this protection for its notes, it was open to every private banker to urge that a similar safeguard should be afforded to his own issues. Instead of occupying the high ground, on which he had originally entrenched himself, Mackintosh was compelled to argue that it was unnecessary to punish other forgeries with death, because they were less frequent. The dilemma in which he was thus placed was so great that he was ultimately compelled to except from the bill forgeries of wills, of marriage registers, of transfers of Stock, and of country bank-notes. These ex-

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. pp. 671–702. *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Chron., pp. 309–314.

ceptions, however, only increased the anomalies of the bill. Its supporters became less enthusiastic in its favour; its opponents were encouraged by the partial success which they had already obtained. The majority in favour of the measure in consequence decreased. The motion for going into committee was carried by 118 votes to 74. The motion for the third reading was only carried by 117 votes to 111. Ministers, who had steadily resisted the measure at every possible stage, were encouraged by the closeness of these numbers to take one division more. They divided again on the motion that "the bill do pass," and succeeded in rejecting it by 121 votes to 115.[1]

The rejection of this measure must have been discouraging to the humane men who were occupying themselves with the reform of the Criminal Code. The success of Mackintosh had, indeed, been greater than that of Romilly; but Mackintosh, like Romilly, had been doomed to see the disappointment of his just expectations. Romilly, undeterred by disappointment, would probably have introduced all his rejected measures at the commencement of the next session. Mackintosh suffered a year to elapse without doing anything at all. On the 4th of June 1822, he proposed a resolution committing the House, "at an early period of the next session, to take into its serious consideration the means of increasing the efficacy of the Criminal Law, by abating its undue rigour." The proposal was met with all the influence which the ministry could bring to bear against it. The Attorney-General moved the previous question. The Tories mustered in support of their law officer. But the arguments of the Attorney-General and the efforts of the Tories were both useless. The House of Commons had deliberately determined to modify the Criminal Code; and Mackintosh's motion was carried by 117 votes to 101.[2] Another victory had been won by the reformers; but its fruits had still to be

Mackintosh re-introduces Criminal Law reform in 1822.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. pp. 893–973, 1094–1113. *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., pp. 52–57—where the numbers are, however, incorrectly given.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 82–87. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. pp. 790–805.

gathered. Over and over again Romilly had carried through the House of Commons his bills for abolishing the punishment of death for privately stealing from dwelling-house or vessel. Yet a man could still be legally hanged for stealing 40*s.* from house or barge. Nothing that the Commons had done had shaken the determination of the Lords to maintain the existing law. There was no reason to suppose that either Peers or Ministry would be more pliant in 1823 than they had proved at any time during the ten preceding years.

Peel takes up the subject in 1823.

It is possible that, if the leaders of the ministry had remained unchanged, the reforms of 1823 would have again been doomed to postponement. Two months after Mackintosh's motion, however, Castlereagh died. By his death one of the main obstacles to the reform of the Criminal Law was removed. However opposed, on other subjects, to change, Canning was not likely to hazard defeat for the barren object of retaining a punishment in the Statute Book which was never inflicted. However bigoted he might, at that time, be on religious topics, Peel was not likely to imitate the example which his predecessor had set him in the Home Office. When Mackintosh introduced his proposals in 1823 he found himself still opposed by the ministry, but the opposition had taken a new form. Peel assented to the principles which Mackintosh had laid down, but objected to proceeding by resolution instead of by bill. Mackintosh's resolutions, thus opposed, were defeated; but Peel at once introduced bills to give effect to Mackintosh's principles. Four "statutes, exempting from capital punishment about an hundred felonies," were introduced and passed without a dissentient voice, without a whisper of dissatisfaction. The bills were carried to the Lords, and passed through all their stages unanimously, without even a debate, though Eldon still "presided over the deliberations of that assembly; and the Royal assent was given without any difficulty to measures which had been represented as mischievous and alarming."[1]

[1] It is impossible in a work of this character to notice mere consolidating statutes, which effected little or no change in the law. But Peel's subsequent

Such was one of the earliest consequences of the death of Londonderry and the reconstruction of the Liverpool Administration. The Tory party, under new guidance, had deserted its old colours, and achieved the victory which it had hitherto prevented. It was the first time in its history, in which it had the courage to pass over to the popular cause. It encouraged politicians to hope for further reforms.[1]

The reform of the Criminal Code was directly attributable to the praiseworthy exertions of Romilly and Mackintosh and the wise counsels of Peel. Indirectly, it was the result of the more kindly spirit and more liberal views which were gradually permeating every class of society. The same kindly instinct had led, in 1822, to the first law for the prevention of cruelty to animals.[2] The same liberal tendency led, in 1823, to the repeal of the revolting regulations for the burial of the suicide.[3] It had already induced an important reform in the law of marriage. The law of marriage was regulated by an Act which had been carried by Lord Hardwicke in the reign of George II.[4] This Act, passed to prevent clandestine marriages, declared that any marriage by license, contracted by a minor without the previous consent of his parents or guardians, was null and void. But the law did not apply to marriages by banns. It did not even compel the residence of the parties in the parish in which the banns were asked; so that the marriage of a minor by license was made void, and the children were illegitimate; the marriage of a minor by banns was not even voidable without an Act of Parliament. It may, perhaps, be thought that the practical inconveniences which resulted from this state of the law were only slight; that minors were rarely married by banns, and that the marriages of minors by license were duly respected

The law of marriage.

efforts in 1826 to consolidate the Criminal Law were as successful and as praiseworthy as those which he made in 1823. See *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xiv. p. 1214. The Acts referred to in the text are 4 Geo. IV. c. 46, 48, 53, 54.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. ix. p. 398. *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Hist., pp. 85–88. Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 254.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 87.

[3] Ibid., 1823, Hist., p. 88. *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 550. 4 Geo. IV. c. 52.

[4] 26 Geo. II. c. 33.

by their relations. Unfortunately, however, the reverse was the case. An Eton boy, highly connected, was married by banns to the daughter of a huntsman in a church in the Borough. Neither of the parties to the marriage had resided in the parish; yet the best authorities considered the marriage indissoluble. William Peter Paget was married by banns in the parish of St. Andrew's, Holborn, in which both the parties were utter strangers. The accidental omission of Paget's second name alone enabled the courts to set aside the marriage. But the manner in which marriages by license were voided was horrible. In 1789 one Wattle married Miss Hathaway, a minor. He obtained the license by swearing that she was of age; he lived with his wife for twenty-seven years, had four children by her, and then instituted proceedings to annul his marriage, and succeeded in his shameless suit. One Watson married Miss Little in 1787. He had six children by her. He believed her to be of age at the time of her marriage. In 1805 she misconducted herself with another person, swore she was a minor in 1787, and obtained a decree annulling her marriage. Harriet Lydiard, the natural daughter of one Whitelock and Sarah Lydiard, with the consent of her mother and guardian married a man named Horner. Three years afterwards Horner annulled the marriage, on the ground that it had not the sanction of a guardian appointed by the Court of Chancery.[1]

The recital of these cases was sufficient to prove the impropriety of the existing law. In 1819 Phillimore, who sat for St. Mawes, brought in a bill to amend it. He desired to limit the period during which suits for voiding a marriage might be brought, and to place marriages by banns on the same footing as marriages by license.[2] His bill was prospective. He had the prudence to resist an amendment intended to give it a retrospective effect; and he succeeded in passing the measure through all its stages in the House of Commons.[3] The bill, however, made no further progress. It was again

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 1464–1468. [2] Ibid., p. 1028.
[3] Ibid., vol. xl. pp. 657–660.

revived in the following year. A clause was added to it legalising retrospectively all marriages of minors where no suit was brought within six months of the passage of the bill; and, with this addition, the bill was sent to the Lords. In the Lords it received an uncompromising opposition from the Chancellor. Eldon declared that "the bill went to take away the advantages of legitimacy from the legitimate, and to confer them on the illegitimate;" that it was a measure calculated to affect the whole "mass of private property in the kingdom, both as to succession and possession." These exaggerated arguments filled the Peers with apprehensions. Supported by the authority of Redesdale, they ultimately led to the rejection of the bill.[1] The private property of the kingdom was given two years of grace by this decision. But two years of grace were all that Eldon had secured for it. The Act of George II. had hitherto only been felt by commoners. In 1822 the Peerage experienced, for the first time, the effects of the Marriage Act. Many years before Lord Donegall had married a Miss May, a minor. Lady Donegall had borne him children. Her eldest son, Lord Belfast, was engaged to be married to Lady Harriet Butler, a daughter of Lord Glengall, when a near relative, Arthur Chichester, intimated his intention to dispute the validity of Lord Donegall's marriage. Mr. Chichester's conduct created considerable consternation. Lord Glengall broke off his daughter's marriage with Lord Belfast, and Lord Donegall's children were threatened with illegitimacy.[2]

This case supplied the Peers with a reason for the Marriage Act which had never before occurred to them. They could no longer refuse the bill; but the course which they took with it was singular. The bill, as it reached their House, affirmed the validity of marriages which had not been declared void by any competent court, and rendered the marriages of minors voidable only during their minority, and at the instance of parents or guardians. The bill, as it left the Lords, retained

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. p. 800; vol. ii. pp. 420, 490, 553.
[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Chron., p. 236.

the retrospective clause, and declared that there should be no such thing as nullity of marriage, but loaded the ceremony with new formalities. The amendment did not reconcile the Chancellor to the measure, who declared that it was neither more nor less than legal robbery, and called God to witness that he had used every means in his power to prevent it passing into law.[1] The formalities which the bill instituted proved so distasteful to the country that Parliament found it necessary to repeal them at the commencement of 1823, and the Lords decided to appoint a committee to frame a new bill on the subject. The bill which was thus framed compelled persons to reside in the parishes in which their banns were asked; it confirmed all previous marriages except those which had already been declared invalid by a competent court; it empowered the courts, on the suit of the parent or of the guardian of the minor, to deprive persons marrying a minor of any property which they would have otherwise obtained from their marriage. It substituted transportation for death as the punishment for false entries in the marriage register. In addition to these provisions it provided that the marriage of a minor by license, without the consent of the parent or guardian, should be voidable by suit instituted by proper parties within twelve months from its solemnisation. The last provision, however, did not become law. The authority of Scripture was quoted to prove that marriage was indissoluble except in the case of the adultery of one of the parties, and that no human court was justified in severing "those whom God hath joined together." The Peers were willing to declare that all marriages of minors should be void; but they were unwilling to admit that any marriage which was *à priori* valid could be voidable. The clause was rejected in a thin House by 28 votes to 22; and the bill, without this addition to it, became law.[2]

Mild and beneficial legislation was, then, the characteristic of the Parliamentary session of 1823. The substitution of Peel

[1] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 461. *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 90. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. pp. 1128–1145.

[2] 4 Geo. IV. c. 17 and c. 76. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. ix. pp. 540, 664

for Sidmouth and of Canning for Castlereagh led to a revolution in the domestic policy of the administration.

The Budget.

The dismissal of Vansittart and the appointment of Robinson to the Exchequer paved the way for a revolution in finance. Hume, for his economies, Vansittart, for his follies, had received the amusing nicknames of "Penny Wise" and "Pound Foolish." None of the weak men who, from time to time, have filled the Exchequer deserved a damaging nickname so thoroughly as Vansittart. Robinson was not likely to imitate the extravagances of his predecessor. In 1823 the House of Commons was furnished with a simple and intelligible statement of the financial situation of the country. The estimated revenue of the year was placed at £57,000,000; the expenditure, without the Sinking Fund, at £50,000,000; the surplus at £7,000,000.[1] Robinson had converted a chronic deficit into a surplus by the simple process of ignoring the Sinking Fund. He devoted £5,000,000 of his surplus to the reduction of debt; the residue to the remission of taxation.

[1] The figures of the Budget were as follows:—

Revenue.

Customs	£10,500,000
Excise	26,000,000
Stamps	6,600,000
Post-office	1,400,000
Assessed Taxes	5,900,000
Land Tax	1,200,000
Miscellaneous	600,000
Trustees of Half-pay and Pensions	4,800,000
	£57,000,000
Estimated Expenditure	49,852,786
Surplus	£7,147,214

Expenditure.

Charge of Debt	£28,124,786
Consolidated Fund	2,050,000
Dead Weight Annuity	2,800,000
Army	7,362,000
Navy	5,442,000
Ordnance	1,380,000
Miscellaneous	1,494,000
Interest on Exchequer Bills	1,200,000
Total	£49,852,786

—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. pp. 194–234. *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Hist., p. 107.

Ireland was relieved from the payment of assessed taxes, which had produced about £100,000 a year. Shop-windows were exempted from taxation, and the window-tax itself was reduced to one-half its previous amount. The assessed taxes, which pressed most severely on the agricultural classes, such as the tax on ponies and mules, were entirely repealed. The taxes on male servants, carriages, and horses were reduced by one-half. These various changes cost the country, it was estimated, £2,200,000 a year.

The Sinking Fund of 1823.

For the first time since the conclusion of the war the House of Commons had been furnished with an intelligible financial statement. After every reduction of taxation, it was estimated that the revenue of the year would exceed the expenditure by about £5,000,000. Robinson decided that this surplus should constitute a new Sinking Fund. Four years before Vansittart had persuaded the House of Commons to resolve that, in order to make a progressive reduction in the debt, there should be a clear surplus of income over expenditure of not less than £5,000,000. During his own tenure of office, however, the intention of the House had never been fulfilled, and the surplus had never reached £3,000,000. Yet the Sinking Fund had been preserved in its entirety during the whole of this period; and the ministry had gone through the solemn farce of borrowing debt in the open market, and of purchasing Stock through the Sinking Fund Commissioners. Robinson decided on discontinuing "this cumbrous machinery;" but the time had not arrived when it would have been possible to have done away with a Sinking Fund altogether. Robinson proposed to set apart his surplus of £5,000,000, and to allow it to accumulate at compound interest in the hands of the Sinking Fund Commissioners. In principle, therefore, there was no difference between the Sinking Fund of Robinson and the Sinking Fund of Vansittart. Both of them contemplated the progressive reduction of the National Debt by the accumulation at compound interest of a sum of money set apart for the purpose. In practice, however, there was a broad distinction between

the two schemes. Vansittart applied a sum of money which he had not got, and which he had no prospect of getting except by borrowing. Robinson, on the contrary, proportioned his Sinking Fund to his surplus, and devoted only the balance of income over expenditure to the reduction of debt. It was still possible to contend that the surplus revenue would have been more usefully employed in the reduction of taxation than in the liquidation of debt; but it was no longer possible to complain that money was being borrowed in the open market for the purpose of maintaining a fictitious Sinking Fund.[1]

Robinson's new Sinking Fund destroyed one of the most cherished traditions of the Tory Party. But there was another tradition which was older and held in greater reverence than the Sinking Fund. The first Navigation Act was passed in the days of the Commonwealth. The system which it introduced was perfected after the Restoration. Nothing could theoretically be better. England was an island. She depended on her supremacy at sea for her safety, for her wealth, for her existence. Her supremacy at sea could only be secured by an adequate supply of able-bodied seamen. A law which provided that the merchandise of Asia, Africa, and America should be only imported in English-built ships, navigated by English commanders, and manned by crews three-fourths of whom were English sailors; a law which imposed heavy duties on goods imported in foreign vessels from any European port, and which would not allow them to be imported at all in Dutch vessels, apparently placed the carrying trade of the greater part of the world in the hands of the English. This result seemed so clear, and at the same time so desirable, that the greatest thinkers uniformly concurred in extolling the wisdom of the Navigation Act. Adam Smith, while admitting that it was originally passed in consequence of a deep feeling

The Navigation Act.

[1] It was objected, in the course of the debates on the bill, that the real surplus was only £3,000,000, and not £5,000,000, £2,000,000 of the surplus being, of course, due to the arrangement under which the "dead weight annuity" had been constituted. For this, and the other debates on the proposal, see *Hansard*, vol. viii. pp. 339–365, 501–509, 534, 543, 579.

of animosity towards the Dutch, declared that the calmest and wisest deliberation could not have produced a more far-sighted enactment. Even Mill considers that the Navigation Laws "were probably, though economically disadvantageous, politically expedient."[1] For one hundred and sixty years, in fact, after the Navigation Laws were passed, every one was agreed in extolling their prudence.

The first doubt which was thrown upon this view was cast upon it by the Government of the United States. The Americans had the wit to see that, if a Navigation Act were beneficial to Great Britain, a similar law would necessarily be beneficial to themselves. They determined, in consequence, to retaliate upon the British by imposing duties on all articles imported into the States in British ships. Great embarrassment and inconvenience arose from this determination. "Where the increased duties countervailed the freight" it became necessary to employ two ships to do the work of one ship. An American ship carried goods from England to America, and returned to England in ballast; while an English ship carried goods from America to England, and returned to America in ballast. This state of things convinced even protectionists that it was possible to carry the principle of the Navigation Acts a little too far. A ship which had to make every other journey in ballast could only earn half-profits for its owner. It was agreed in 1815 that American vessels should be placed on the same footing as British vessels, and that all discriminating duties imposed on goods carried in American bottoms should be repealed. Our great transatlantic rival, however, had taught the world that the Navigation Act of England was only formidable so long as it was tolerated by other countries. Portugal imitated the example of the United States, and obliged us to place Portuguese on the same footing as American vessels; and in 1821 the United Netherlands passed a law allowing a premium of 10 per cent. upon all goods imported in Dutch vessels.

The attitude of the United States had virtually made the

[1] *Political Economy*, People's Edition, p. 555.

continuance of the Navigation Act, in its old form, impossible. Wallace, the member for Weymouth, had filled the office of Vice-President of the Board of Trade since 1818. He received so little consideration on the reconstruction of the ministry in 1822 that he was driven to resign; and he was ultimately pacified by being appointed to the Mint in the place of Lord Maryborough, who "was sent to the dogs." He has received so little consideration from posterity that Porter describes him as President and not Vice-President of the Board of Trade in 1822; and Alison, who, in describing the legislation of 1822, copies Porter word for word, repeats the blunder. Yet Wallace is the statesman who first persuaded Parliament to modify the provisions of the Navigation Acts. He is the statesman who had the foresight to perceive that the trade of this country would flourish best if it were freed from the operation of restrictive laws. With this object he succeeded in obtaining the appointment of a committee on the foreign trade of the kingdom; and in carrying in 1822 five bills to give effect to the recommendations of this committee. The first of these bills repealed all the cumbrous and obsolete statutes on the subject which had preceded the Navigation Act of Charles II.; the second of them repealed the provisions of the Act which forbade the importation of Asian, African, and American produce into Britain except in British bottoms; and which forbade the importation of European produce into Britain except in British bottoms, or in foreign vessels, not being Dutch, sailing direct from the port of production. The third bill re-enacted the provisions which had thus been repealed, omitting the exception which the jealousy of Dutch rivalry had inserted in the original Navigation Act. The fourth bill regulated the trade between America and the West Indies and this country. The fifth bill enabled the West Indies to trade direct in British ships with any foreign nation; and opened, therefore, extensive markets to the inhabitants of the West Indies.[1]

Wallace's committee on foreign trade and commercial policy.

[1] 3 Geo. IV. c. 41, 42, 43, 44, 45. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. p. 708, for Wallace's own description of his measures. Cf. also vol. viii. p. 98; *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 122; and Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 395.

Such were the reforms introduced by Wallace into the commercial system of Britain. Their merits were fully appreciated by the London merchants. "There was but one opinion amongst them, and that was that, since the first establishment of the Board of Trade, all the exertions of all its former Presidents were not, when united, equal to those which had been made by the right honourable gentleman alone."[1] Wallace, in fact, had made a reputation in his office, which ought to have secured his position or have led to his advancement. Unfortunately, the reconstruction of the Government, on the accession of Canning, suggested an alteration in the constitution of the Board of Trade. For the sake of providing for Huskisson, Liverpool had offered Charles Wynn the highest situations at the disposal of the ministry. He had given him the refusal of the Speakership of the House of Commons and of the Governor-Generalship of India. When such prodigious offers were made for the sake of securing an adequate opening for Huskisson, a Vice-President of the Board of Trade could hardly expect to receive the consideration which his merits deserved. Robinson, the President of the Board, succeeded Vansittart; Wallace, the Vice-President, finding himself on the eve of supercession by Huskisson, resigned. The good of the public service had been sacrificed to suit the convenience of the minister, and one of the most useful of politicians had been deliberately driven from office. In one respect, indeed, the public gained as much as it had lost. In the liberality of his views, in the knowledge of commercial matters, Huskisson resembled Wallace. His appointment to the Board of Trade marks an important epoch in the commercial history of England. It is only fair, however, to recollect that the reforms for which Huskisson is remembered had been begun by Wallace; and that, if Huskisson commenced the structure of free trade, the foundations had been laid by his predecessor in office.[2]

Wallace's resignation.

[1] Baring, in the House of Commons. *Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 104.

[2] It may be added that, thanks to Wallace, the country gained in another respect. Up to 1825 the Irish shilling had included thirteen pence. In 1825 Wallace succeeded in assimilating the currencies of the three countries. *Hansard*, vol. xiii. p. 573.

Huskisson undertook the duties of President of the Board of Trade at a critical period. In 1823 the Prussian Government raised its dues on British vessels, "and intimated in a manner not to be mistaken that Prussia would more fully adopt the retaliatory system" if no alteration were made in British policy. In such a crisis only two alternatives were possible: "either we must commence a commercial conflict through the instrumentality of protecting duties and prohibitions, or else we must admit other powers to a full equality and reciprocity of shipping duties." The age in which the first of these alternatives would have been adopted was gone by. Huskisson, therefore, proposed to give the King in Council power to conclude reciprocity treaties with foreign nations; and, in return for equal privileges abroad, to admit the vessels of foreign nations into British harbours on the same terms as British merchantmen. The change was inevitable. Discriminating duties, favouring British owners, may have been advantageous as long as other countries submitted to them; they became impracticable when other nations decided on protecting their own commerce. The facts were so clear that Huskisson's remedy was adopted in a thin House by a large majority. The attitude of foreign Governments had effected the destruction of a system which had lasted for one hundred and sixty years; and the first step was taken by the legislature towards realising the prediction which the poet had boldly hazarded a century before:—

Huskisson's commercial policy.

> "The time shall come when, free as seas or wind,
> Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind;
> Whole nations enter with each swelling tide,
> And seas but join the regions they divide."[1]

The session of 1823 had been remarkable in many ways. The Criminal Code had been relieved of some of its harsher features; the marriage law had been reformed; the financial system had been simplified; the Sinking Fund had been

[1] Pope's *Windsor Forest*. Huskisson's account of the new law will be found in *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 795. The division, 75 votes to 15, in ibid., p. 1439.

placed on a new footing; and protection in navigation had been replaced by reciprocity. During the continuance of the session the internal condition of the country continued to improve. "It is with the greatest satisfaction"—so ran the king's speech at the close of it—"that his Majesty is enabled to contemplate the flourishing condition of all branches of our commerce and manufactures, and the gradual abatement of those difficulties under which the agricultural interest has so long and so severely suffered."[1] The same gratifying features continued throughout the recess. "Trade and commerce"—so ran the king's speech at the commencement of 1824—"are extending themselves both at home and abroad. An increasing activity pervades almost every branch of manufacture. Agriculture is recovering from the depression under which it laboured."[2] Throughout the whole of 1824 the same satisfactory appearances of continuous prosperity were visible. The king, in closing the session, had "the greatest satisfaction in repeating his congratulations upon the general and increasing prosperity of the country."[3] "There never was a period"—so ran the speech at the commencement of 1825—"in the history of this country, when all the great interests of the nation were in so thriving a condition."[4] Prosperity was attended with its natural consequences. "At no former period," said the speech in 1824, "has there prevailed throughout all classes of the community a more cheerful spirit of order, or a more just sense of the advantages which, under the blessings of Providence, they enjoy." "There never was a period in the history of this country"—such was the testimony of the speech in 1825—"when a feeling of content and satisfaction was more widely diffused through all classes of the British people." For the first time since the conclusion of the Great War the country was prosperous, and for the first time since the conclusion of the war the people were contented. The universal contentment which was the result of prosperity

Marked improvement in the condition of the country.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 1544.
[2] Ibid., vol. x. p. 1, 2.
[3] Ibid., vol. xi. p. 1508.
[4] Ibid., vol. xii. p. 1.

in 1824 and 1825 affords the best proof that the troubles of 1817 and 1819 had their origin in adversity.

The improvement in the condition of the country was reflected in the returns of trade[1] and in the growth of the revenue. In his Budget speech in 1823 Robinson had estimated a revenue of £10,500,000 from the customs; he received £11,500,000 from this single source. The entire revenue of the year had been estimated at £57,000,000. Taxation representing upwards of £2,000,000 had been repealed; yet the actual receipts amounted to £57,672,999. Including the new Sinking Fund of £5,000,000 the entire expenditure had only amounted to £55,962,014. A substantial surplus of £1,710,985 had accrued. The country had paid every charge upon it, had made some progress towards the redemption of its debt, and had an income which exceeded by one million and three-quarters its ordinary requirements.

The consequent expansion of trade and increase of the revenue.

The revenue of 1823 had been augmented by an unexpected windfall. During the continuance of the war large sums of money had been advanced by Great Britain to the military potentates of the Continent for the purpose of enabling them to continue their exertions against France. In 1823 some sudden fit of honesty induced the Emperor of Austria to repay a portion of the loan which he had thus received. "So highly honourable was this illustrious sovereign," sneered Brougham in the House of Commons,[2] "so remarkably correct was he in his pecuniary dealings—so

The Austrian loan.

[1] In 1822 the official value of the imports was under £30,000,000; it rose in 1823 to £34,591,264; in 1824 to £36,056,551; and in 1825 to £42,660,954. The declared value of the exports amounted in 1823 to £34,589,410; it rose in 1824 to £37,600,021, and in 1825 to £38,077,330.—M'Culloch's *Commercial Dict.*, ad verb. Imports and Exports.

[2] Metternich was, perhaps naturally, excessively sore at the language which was used on this occasion. "Le nom de l'Autriche," he wrote, "ne peut-il plus être prononcé par eux sans que les bases de son antique et utile existence ne soient attaquées? Le sacrifice que l'Empereur a porté à la seule considération de ses relations et d'honneur et de politique envers un ancien allié, ne devait-il obtenir d'autre récompense qu'une défense dérisoire, et le ridicule jeté sur une transaction à laquelle on n'attribue d'autre valeur que celle d'un *God send?*"—*Wellington's Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 250.

singularly distinguished was he among his brother sovereigns for his exact sense of honour," that he "had the common honesty to pay us two shillings and sixpence in the pound upon the money he had borrowed of us so long ago."[1] A dividend of only two shillings and sixpence in the pound on the Austrian debt made, however, an appreciable addition to the resources of the country. It amounted to no less than two millions and a half. Three-quarters of a million of the amount were paid by Austria in 1823; the residue of about a million and three-quarters was payable in 1824. An increasing revenue was, therefore, unexpectedly augmented by a fortunate windfall. Robinson, in these circumstances, had an easy and agreeable task before him. The revenue was computed at £57,385,000; the expenditure, including the Sinking Fund, at £56,332,000.[2] There was,

The Budget of 1824.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 358.

[2] The exact figures were as follows:—

Estimated Revenue.

Customs	£11,550,000
Excise	25,625,000
Stamps	6,800,000
Taxes	5,100,000
Post-office	1,460,000
Miscellaneous	730,000
Austrian Loan	1,500,000
Half-pay and Pensions	4,620,000
	£57,385,000
Expenditure	56,332,924
Surplus	£1,052,076

Estimated Expenditure.

Permanent Debt Interest	£28,073,196
Sinking Fund	5,134,458
Dead Weight Annuity	2,800,000
Other charges on Consolidated Fund	2,050,000
Total Consolidated Fund	£38,057,654
Exchequer Bills Interest	1,050,000
Army	7,440,945
Navy	5,762,893
Ordnance	1,410,044
Miscellaneous	2,611,388
Total	£56,332,924

—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. x. pp. 305, 306.

therefore, an available surplus of £1,050,000 to increase the surplus of £1,710,000 which had already accrued during the previous year.

The military and naval expenditure proposed in 1824 did not materially vary from that which had been sanctioned in 1823. But the miscellaneous expenditure, or the civil service estimates, to use a modern phrase, showed a large increase. This increase was partly due to the exceptional circumstances of the year; but it afforded a new proof of the prosperity of the country. The fortunate windfall receivable from Austria suggested the possibility of incurring unusual expenditure of a temporary nature. The greater prosperity which was everywhere apparent diminished the necessity for strict economy. Seven years before, in a memorable crisis, Liverpool's Administration had decided on applying a million of public money to the building of new churches. The repayment of the Austrian loan induced it to devote, in 1824, another half-million to the same object. The grant was not popular in the country, but it was easily carried in the House of Commons.[1] Modern politicians will regard it with little favour. But even modern politicians will have no hesitation in approving the other exceptional expenditure which was at the same time agreed to. There are few objects of which Englishmen are more proud than the noble castle on the banks of the Thames, which for eight centuries has been the residence of English sovereigns. The sovereign of England has no palace in the metropolis which can be compared with what the Tuileries once were. But the sovereign of England can at least boast of a castle, within a drive of London, which in antiquity, in situation, and in magnificence excels the glories and the traditions of Versailles. Commenced by the Conqueror, rebuilt by the third Edward, improved by Elizabeth, Windsor was almost as old as the British monarchy. The spectator could look down from its

Windsor Castle.

[1] It was voted by 148 votes to 59. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. p. 361. Cf. Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 52.

battlements upon the chief of English rivers, and from the same vantage-ground could survey a park which, in the luxuriance of its timber, is unrivalled in the world. At a little distance on one side, nestling under the shadow of the castle, lies the venerable college at which successive generations of English worthies have been educated. Scarcely farther in another direction is the green meadow where the liberties of England were extorted from a reluctant sovereign. Few spots in England are richer in associations; but in 1824 the recollection of recent sorrow effaced the older traditions connected with the castle. It was in Windsor that George III. had passed the closing years of his long and memorable reign. It was in Windsor that he had lived and died in solitary magnificence, his numerous afflictions tempered by only one blessing—that his mind had ceased to remember what he once had been. The frugal habits of George III. had prevented his embellishing the castle during his own rule. It would have been a cruel wrong to have embellished it in his affliction. The structure had, in consequence, fallen out of repair, and was no longer a suitable residence for the sovereign of the wealthiest country of the world. The Administration decided that it could not do better than apply a portion of the unexpected windfall to the repair and embellishment of Windsor; and it asked the legislature to spend £300,000 on this work.[1] The expenditure which was thus sanctioned was supplemented in a succeeding reign; and Windsor, improved and extended, became the pride and glory of the English nation.

The great majority of Englishmen were not directly interested in the improvement of Windsor Castle. However much they might desire that the head of the nation should be lodged in the manner which was suited to his rank, they could not hope themselves to witness the splendour of the court. In the same twelve months, however, in which the first grant was made for the embellishment of Windsor, steps were taken to provide a complete National Library and to acquire a National Gallery.

The king's library and the National Gallery.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. p. 147.

During his long reign George III. had collected a magnificent library of 65,000 volumes. He died, for all intents and purposes, without a will; and after his death some dispute arose as to the disposition of his property. The new king conceived that the late king's property descended to himself, and appropriated everything on which he was permitted to lay his hands. He even contemplated dispersing the noble library which his father had had the good taste and prudence to collect. The ministers and the royal family interfered to prevent a proceeding which they saw would be regarded as a scandal; and George IV., prevented from selling the books, presented the library to the British Museum.[1] The ministers applied for a grant of £40,000 towards the erection of suitable rooms for its reception,[2] and the library of the British Museum, enriched by the new acquisition, became one of the noblest in the world. Royal personages have little difficulty in obtaining the approval of those who write the annals of their lives. George IV.'s conduct in appropriating his father's personal estate, and in desiring to disperse his father's library, was deserving of censure. The historian of Europe contents himself with praising the munificent gift of the splendid library;[3] and another historian speaks of it as a noble instance of royal munificence.[4]

In the following spring the country succeeded in obtaining a more splendid acquisition than even the late king's library. John Julius Angerstein, a rich London merchant, had suc-

[1] Greville's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 65. [2] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 1113.

[3] Alison, vol. iii. p. 681. Greville's account is related on the authority of the Duke of York, and is evidently correct. Lord Colchester implies that the king gave the library to the public because Lady Conyngham thought the octagon room, in which the books were, would make a good reception-room (vol. iii. p. 291). Some doubt has been thrown on this story by a letter of Mr. Herries (in his *Memoir*, vol. ii. p. 272), on which Mr. Croker apparently founded a note in the *Quarterly Review*, December 1852; but the fact that Herries had not heard of the transaction does not seem to get rid of the positive account which the Duke of York gave to Mr. Greville. Almost at the same time Mr. Payne Knight bequeathed a magnificent collection of medals, &c., to the British Museum. See *Hansard*, vol. xi. p. 1166.

[4] Hughes, vol. vii. p. 14. Hughes and Alison both apparently took their epithet from Robinson. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. p. 600.

ceeded during a long life in collecting a gallery of pictures. He died in 1822, and the Government had the opportunity of purchasing the collection for the sum of £57,000. Fortunately for the country, the opportunity was not lost. The pictures were acquired;[1] a house was secured in Pall Mall for their reception and exhibition; and the first step was taken towards the formation of the noble gallery which has been gradually collected since. Angerstein's own collection formed an excellent nucleus for a National Gallery. It comprised paintings from all the principal Continental schools, and pictures by the best British artists. Raphael's "Julius II.," Titian's "Rape of Ganymede," Rubens' "Holy Family," Rembrandt's "Woman Taken in Adultery," Claude's "Embarcation of the Queen of Sheba," Hogarth's "Marriage à-la-Mode," and Sir Joshua Reynolds' "Lord Heathfield" were among the treasures of British and foreign art which thus became the property of the nation. But the wisdom of the purchase was not measurable by the mere value of Angerstein's collection. Ministers had reason to believe that, "if a National Gallery had existed in former times, the liberality of individuals would long ere this have furnished it with as fine and beautiful specimens of art as can be found in any part of the world." They had reason to hope that, if a National Gallery were formed then, the collection "of a high-spirited individual, of acknowledged taste and judgment," would be presented to it.[2] The anticipations which were thus expressed were fortunately fulfilled. Two years after the National Gallery was opened, Sir George Beaumont presented sixteen pictures to the nation. The generosity of private individuals attracts less attention than the cheap munificence of kings. The historian, who goes out of his way to apply to George IV. an epithet which was wholly inapplicable to his conduct, omits to mention the donation of Sir George Beaumont.

The great majority of the people cordially approved the exceptional expenditure undertaken by the Government for the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 316, and vol. xi. p. 101.

[2] Robinson, on the 23rd of February. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. x. p. 316.

purpose of increasing the magnificence of the court, and of encouraging the literary and artistic tastes of the people. The prosperity which was everywhere prevalent justified the policy; and the fortunate windfall from the Austrian Government made it easy to give effect to it. The exceptional expenditure which was thus undertaken did not, however, absorb the whole of the surplus. The estimated revenue of the year amounted to £57,385,000; the estimated expenditure to only £56,332,924; the probable surplus to £1,052,076. The prosperity of the country, moreover, made it possible to increase this surplus. In February the price of Consols had risen to 90; the old 4 per cents., redeemable at par, were quoted at about 102; and the time had therefore arrived at which it was both possible and desirable to redeem this Stock. The old 4 per cent. annuities amounted to about £75,000,000; they involved an annual charge of about £3,000,000; but they could not be legally redeemed without six months' notice to their holders. Robinson proposed to give the holders of the 4 per cents. six months' notice that the Stock would be redeemed, unless, within six weeks from the receipt of the notice, they desired to exchange it for a 3½ per cent. Stock.[1] In the great majority of cases the exchange was at once made, and a saving of ten shillings a year on every £100 Stock, or of £375,000 a year on the £75,000,000, was effected.[2]

The redemption of the 4 per cents.

A change, to which it was impossible to object, had increased the surplus from £1,052,000 to £1,427,000. Another change, which, a few years before, would have provoked grave objections, concurrently increased it. Among the numerous devices, which previous generations have originated, for the purpose

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 317.

[2] The 4 per cent. annuities (new and old) amounted in 1823 to £232,311,561. In 1824 they only amounted to £156,091,332. They had decreased in the interval by £76,000,000. In 1823 the 3½ per cents. amounted to £28,192,997; in 1824 they exceeded £98,000,000; they had increased in the interval by £70,000,000. These figures show the operation of Robinson's scheme. Holders possessing £70,000,000 exchanged their securities; the remainder elected to be paid off. (See Returns of National Debt, Session 1858, No. 443, pp. 47, 48.)

of increasing the trade of the country, the most common is the system of bounties. The statesmen who desired to encourage the manufacture of silk supposed that the easiest way of doing so was to put a tax on the importation of foreign silk, and pay a bounty on the exportation of British silk. The effect of this remarkable system was disastrous to the British nation. The price of silk was artificially increased at home; but the foreigner was enabled to purchase British silk at less than its prime cost; the manufacturer depending on the bounty, and not on the price alone, for his profit. This system continued in force for upwards of a century, and large sums of money were annually paid by Britain in the shape of bounties. The Dutch had originally excited the especial jealousy of the British nation. Holland was England's most formidable rival on the seas, both in war and in peace. In the seventeenth century the Dutch fleet obtained for a time the undisputed mastery of the English Channel. Dutch vessels competed with English traders in every quarter of the globe. Even on the coasts of Britain Dutch fishermen captured the shoals of fish which the British had not the industry or the tackle to secure; and the British sailor remained

Abolition of bounties.

> "Shamefully passive, while Batavian fleets
> Defraud us of the glittering finny swarms
> That heave our friths and crowd upon our shores."

There were two fisheries in which the Dutch, at the commencement of the seventeenth century, had obtained a virtual supremacy: the herring fishery and the whale fishery. It is said that in 1680 no less than 260 ships and 14,000 seamen were employed in the Dutch whale fishery. Fifty years afterwards, or in 1732, the British Legislature was induced to grant a bounty of 20*s.* a ton to every British vessel of more than 200 tons burden employed in the whale fishery. The premium was raised in 1749 to 40*s.* a ton; and numerous vessels were fitted out for the purpose—as McCulloch has suggested—not of catching whales, but of catching the bounty. The real causes which had led to the growth of the trade were evident

when the bounty was reduced in 1777 from 40*s.* to 30*s.* In the succeeding five years the vessels employed in the fishery decreased from 105 to 39. The bounty was restored to its old rate in 1781; it was again reduced in 1787 to 30*s.*, and in 1795 to 20*s.* a ton. Even at 20*s.* a ton the bounty cost the country nearly £50,000 a year.[1]

The British herring fishery rose to importance about the middle of the eighteenth century. The country was jealous of the success which the Dutch were notoriously obtaining in the prosecution of this industry; and Thomson only gave expression to the feeling which was rapidly gaining ground when he wrote the complaint which has already been quoted. The demand for some measure of encouragement was so great, that Parliament, in 1750, sanctioned the incorporation of an association called the Society of the Free British Fishery, for the purpose of carrying on the fishery. The society had a nominal capital of half a million; it enjoyed the patronage of the Prince of Wales; it was allowed its salt free of duty; and a bounty of 30*s.* a ton was granted on all decked vessels of from twenty to eighty tons burden engaged in the fishery. All these inducements, however, could not make the undertaking a success. The enterprise failed. A new company, formed in 1786, experienced almost equal ill-success; and Parliament, in 1808, disheartened by failure, adopted a new system. Seven commissioners were then appointed for the management of the fisheries. Bounties of £3 a ton were paid on all vessels, from sixty to a hundred tons burden, engaged in the fishery; and bounties of 2*s.* a barrel were granted on every barrel of herrings barrelled on the day on which they were caught. The barrel bounty was increased in 1815 to 4*s.* or to one-fourth the selling price of the barrel.[2] These bounties cost the country about £70,000 a year.

The bounties on the whale fishery had been granted only temporarily, and naturally expired in 1824. Robinson pro-

[1] McCulloch's *Commercial Dict.*, ad verb. "Bounty" and "Whale Fishery." *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 320. Thomson's *Seasons*—Autumn.

[2] Mitchell on the Herring, p. 225. McCulloch, ad verb. "Herrings."

posed that they should not be renewed. The herring fishery had of late years made rapid progress, and Robinson decided that its artificial encouragement was no longer necessary, and that the bounty might gradually be reduced and ultimately cease. At the same time he determined on taking steps for terminating a more important bounty. The linen manufacture of the country was chiefly settled in Belfast and Dundee. Its growth had been encouraged by the same expedients as those by which the herring and whale fisheries had been promoted. Heavy bounties were paid on the exportation of linen, and the trade, by these means, had been artificially extended. The system had lasted so long that Robinson did not venture on terminating it at one blow. He only dared to propose that the bounties on the inferior kinds of linen should cease at once, and that the bounties on the higher classes of linen should be annually decreased 10 per cent.[1] Even this moderate proposal excited vehement opposition. The Scotch declared that the abolition of the bounties would ruin the rising town of Dundee; the Irish affirmed that it would be attended with irreparable injury to the only flourishing and industrious part of Ireland.[2] Robinson, however, relying on the knowledge and support of his colleague, Huskisson, adhered to his policy. His proposals were accepted by the legislature, and a deathblow was given to the old system of bounties.

Reduction of taxation.

The surplus had originally amounted to £1,052,000. The reduction of the rate of interest on the old 4 per cents. had increased it to £1,427,000. The abolition of bounties raised it to rather more than £1,600,000. The whole of this sum could not, however, accrue during the existing year; and Robinson did not venture to do more than remit £1,062,000 of taxation. The use which he made of his surplus was remarkable.

Rum.

Rum was one of the chief products of the West Indies. Since the abolition of the slave trade these colonies had been in a depressed con-

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 322.
[2] Ibid., pp. 452, 943, 1309.

dition; and a decrease in the consumption of rum, and a rapid fall in the price of this article, had intensified this depression. Robinson decided to reduce the duty on rum and place it on a level with the tax on British spirits. The reduction, he estimated, would cost the revenue £150,000. It inflicted another blow on the system of protection. The second change which Robinson proposed was of a similar character. Coals, carried to London by sea, paid a duty of 9*s.* 4*d.* a chaldron. The importation of coals to London in any other way was subject to a duty of 10*s.* a chaldron and to other restrictions. Coals, in every other part of England, paid a duty of 6*s.* a ton. Robinson decided on replacing these duties with an uniform tax of 6*s.* a ton, and on removing all other restrictions on the importation of coal into London by river or canal. The change deprived the collieries of Northumberland and Durham of the monopoly which they had previously enjoyed in the metropolitan market. If the consumption had not increased, it would have cost the revenue £200,000 a year. But Robinson naturally concluded that lower prices would increase the use of coal, and consequently diminish the loss to the revenue. The net loss he placed in his Budget at only £100,000 a year.[1]

Coals.

The third alteration which Robinson made in his Budget marked still more clearly the difference between his own views and those of his predecessor. It has already been stated in a previous chapter of this work that the trade in wool was originally the great staple trade of this country. From the restoration of Charles II. to 1825 an extraordinary course was taken for the encouragement of this trade. The exportation of wool was absolutely prohibited, the statesmen imagining that the clothiers would always be able to buy their raw material cheap, if the farmers were forbidden to dispose of their fleeces in a foreign market. But the agricultural classes naturally replied that, if they were prevented from selling their wool abroad, they ought to be concurrently protected against the importation of foreign wool. At the

Wool.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 327.

commencement of the present century either their arguments or the necessities of the country prevailed. A duty of 5*s.* 3*d.* per cwt. was placed on foreign wool. The duty was raised in 1813 to 6*s.* 8*d.*, and in 1819 to 56*s.*, or 6*d.* per. lb. The ministry declared that this enormous duty was imposed, not for the purposes of protection, but for the purposes of revenue. Whatever may have been the real cause of Vansittart's policy, it proved most injurious to the woollen trade. The manufacturers agitated for the removal of the tax; but their agitation was always met with the answer that, if the import duty were reduced, the prohibition on the exportation of wool must be removed. Manufacturers and agriculturists gradually perceived that they would both be gainers from such a compromise. Robinson consequently found himself able in 1824 to give effect to it. He decided to reduce the duty on foreign wool from 6*d.* to 1*d.* the lb., and at the same time to sanction the exportation of British wool on a similar duty. This reversal of Vansittart's policy, he estimated, would cost the country about £350,000 a year.[1]

Silk.

The fourth change which Robinson made in his Budget of 1824 effected an even greater reform in the commercial policy of the country. The manufacture of silk in England was of more modern growth than the manufacture of wool. It had been promoted by the clumsy contrivances to which Parliament was in the habit of resorting in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The importation of foreign silk was prohibited, and a monopoly was therefore conceded to the British manufacturer. So strict was this monopoly, that the excise officer had a right to search a man's house or stop a man's carriage if he suspected it to contain foreign silk; and any one, even "the commonest ruffian in the street,"[2] might snatch a silken article from any passer-by if he suspected it to be of foreign manufacture. These rigid laws failed. Their only effect was to convert smuggling into an important trade, and to necessitate the employment of a numerous and well-

[1] McCulloch, ad verb. "Wool." *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 329.

[2] Huskisson's expression, in *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 808.

armed coastguard. It was impossible to prevent the importation of an article of such lightness and value as silk. Foreign silk was constantly worn. Hume in 1822 drew a bandana handkerchief from his pocket and blew his nose with it in the House of Commons. Robinson reminded him that any gentleman present had a right to take possession of it and export it to a foreign country.[1] The absurdity of the law, which it was Hume's object to expose, could not have been emphasised more strongly than by the declaration of the minister.

In theory, however, the law had given a monopoly to the British manufacturer. There seemed, in consequence, little or no injustice in imposing a heavy import duty on the raw material which he used. So long as he was exempt from all foreign competition, the manufacturer ought evidently to have been able to recover the whole of the duty from the purchaser of his goods. But a simple duty on raw silk would not have satisfied the requirements of the legislators of the eighteenth century. Their first object was to secure the British manufacturer a monopoly of the silk trade; their second object was to induce him to obtain his raw silk from British possessions. Raw silk from the East Indies paid an import duty of 4*s.* a pound, raw silk from China and Italy a duty of 5*s.* 6*d.* a pound, and organzine[2] a duty of 14*s.* 10*d.* a pound. Robinson, with Huskisson's assistance, reversed the policy which these duties and prohibitions embodied. Instead of vainly endeavouring to keep foreign silk out of the market, he decided to admit it on an *ad valorem* duty of 30 per cent. But in taking this step he gave the British weavers ample encouragement by largely reducing the duties on the raw

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 331.

[2] Raw silk is silk simply wound from the cocoon—one of the wound or reeled threads is known as "singles"—two or more threads twisted together are known as "tram." "Thrown" silk is composed of two, three, or more singles twisted together in a contrary direction to that in which the singles of which it is composed are twisted. The silk so twisted is known as "organzine." The heavy duties on organzine were first imposed in 1719, after the erection at Derby of the first British throwing-mill. McCulloch, ad verb. "Silk." The term "thrown" silk, it is believed, is derived from the throstle used in throwing it.

material. The duty on Indian silk was reduced from 4*s.* to 3*d.*; that on Chinese and Italian silks from 5*s.* 6*d.* to 6*d.*; that on organzine from 14*s.* 10*d.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* a pound. These alterations, it was estimated, would involve a loss to the revenue of £462,000 a year.[1] They did not, however, conciliate the manufacturers. Petition after petition was presented against the bill; counsel were called in and heard against it; and it was only after a series of debates that the proposal was at length reluctantly adopted.

High duties were not the only causes which were interfering with the growth of the British silk trade. The chief seat of the trade was originally in Spitalfields; and in 1773 the Spitalfields weavers persuaded the legislature to authorise the Lord Mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen of London, and the magistrates of Middlesex, Westminster, and the Liberty of the Tower, to regulate the wages to be paid to the journeymen silk weavers residing within those districts; "and at the same time to declare that masters so residing, employing weavers in other districts," should be liable to severe penalties. An Act of 1792 extended the operation of the Spitalfields Act to "manufactures of silk mixed with other materials;" and an Act of 1811 applied it to journeywomen as well as journeymen.[2] These Acts had a most pernicious effect on the Spitalfields manufacturers. Magistrates, ignorant of the conditions of the trade, were incompetent to fix the remuneration of the persons who were employed in it. Masters were compelled to pay skilled and unskilled workmen the same wages. The magistrates had the folly to declare that weaving in which machinery was employed should be paid at the same rate as weaving done by hand. Every improvement in machinery was consequently discouraged, and the use of machinery became almost impracticable. If the Spitalfields Acts had been universal in their application, the silk trade would probably have been driven from the country. Fortu-

The Spitalfields Act.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. x. pp. 333, 800–829.

[2] 13 Geo. III. c. 68., 32 Geo. III., c. 44., 51 Geo. III., c. 7. *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 146.

nately they were only local, and their sole effect was to drive the trade from Spitalfields. "Many works of the first consequence," said the Spitalfields manufacturers in a petition to the House of Commons in 1823, "have already been transferred to Norwich, Manchester, Macclesfield, Taunton, and other towns, where they are performed at from one-half to two-thirds of the price for which, under these Acts, they can be made in London, Westminster, or Middlesex. The removal of the entire manufacture from the metropolis" will be "inevitable, if these Acts be allowed to continue much longer in force."[1]

The petition from which this extract is taken was presented on the 9th of May 1823. Ricardo at once rose to denounce the Spitalfields Acts; Wallace declared them "unjust to the merchant, unjust to the manufacturer, and above all, unjust to the workman;" and Huskisson announced his intention "on the earliest possible day to submit a motion" for their repeal.[2] The promise was kept; but the announcement that the Acts were to be repealed excited an unexpected opposition. The Spitalfields weavers declared that the Acts had been exceptionally beneficial to them, and they feared that their repeal would be followed by the reduction of their wages and the increase of the poor-rates. A petition against Huskisson's bill was hastily prepared. Though no females and no males under twenty years of age were permitted to sign it, it received within three days no less than 11,000 signatures. Fowell Buxton, the member for Weymouth, who lived and conducted his business as a brewer in Spitalfields, undertook to present the petition to the House;[3] and a large majority of the House of Commons, though in favour of the bill, wished that its progress might be delayed until the weavers themselves appreciated its merits. Huskisson, however, satisfied that the principle of his measure was sound, declined to listen to the application for delay. Counsel were heard against the bill; but a motion for its re-committal was rejected on the 9th of

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 147. [2] Ibid., p. 149.
[3] Ibid., p. 378.

June by 68 votes to 60; and its third reading was carried, two days afterwards, by 53 votes to 40.[1]

The bill had passed the House of Commons; but there was no doubt of the feeling which it had excited in the east of London. On the evening on which it was read a third time, Palace Yard and the avenues to the House were thronged by a dense mob from Spitalfields. The members, as they passed to the House, were entreated to oppose the measure, and a rumour that the third reading was rejected was received with exultation by the crowd. The true state of the case, however, was soon known, and the people dispersed in dejection at the news.[2] Though, however, the weavers were disappointed at the result, their opposition did not cease. They thronged the approaches to the House of Lords on the 16th of June—"a most orderly though numerous mob"[3]—and they persuaded the Peers to refer the bill to a select committee.[4] The select committee agreed with the House of Commons in condemning the Spitalfields Acts and in recommending their repeal. But there was a large party in the House of Lords unprepared to accept the decision of the House of Commons or the recommendations of their own committee. Men like Harrowby,[5] Ellenborough,[6] and Colchester[7] had the ingenuity to discover a new reason for retaining the Acts which economists like Ricardo, Huskisson, and Wallace desired to repeal. The tendency of the Acts was to drive the silk trade from Spitalfields; and these legislators, afraid of "another Manchester growing up near the metropolis," thought that the legislature should do something to counteract this tendency. Even the ministry was not united in supporting a measure introduced by a minister. Bexley, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, introduced the bill; Harrowby, the President of the Council, moved its rejection. The Prime Minister, Liverpool, supported Bexley; and the Chancellor, Eldon, supported Harrowby. Men accustomed to the want of discipline in the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ix. pp. 818, 833.
[2] *Ann. Reg.* (1823), Chron., p. 71.
[3] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 290.
[4] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 988.
[5] Ibid., vol. ix. p. 1530.
[6] Ibid., p. 988.
[7] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 293.

Government were amazed at these open dissensions. But the Chancellor and Harrowby proved too strong for the Prime Minister and Bexley. The bill was cut down from its original proportions, and the power of the magistrates to fix the rate of wages was left unrepealed. The Commons had no fancy for the play of "Hamlet" with the character of the Prince of Denmark left out. They declined to assent to the Lords' amendments, and the bill was dropped.[1] The Spitalfields bill had been stopped by the amendments of the Peers; but the Lords were unable to do more than delay the passage of the Act for a year. On the 4th of May 1824, Lauderdale introduced a bill in the Upper House to carry out Huskisson's proposal. The second reading was carried on the 14th of May by 23 votes to 8; the third reading on the 21st of May by 61 votes to 55. The bill, thus approved by the Lords, was accepted without remark in the Commons, and passed through all its stages.[2]

The debate on the Spitalfields Bill had indirectly drawn attention to the general condition of the laws which regulated the labour of the working classes. Some persons, who agreed with Huskisson in thinking that labour should be free, disagreed with him in desiring to repeal the Spitalfields Acts as the first step towards freeing it. The Spitalfields Acts, whatever objections might be urged against them, were at any rate passed in the interests of the labouring community. The artisans, almost without exception, were in favour of them; and the demand for their repeal came from the employers. There was, however, another set of Acts—the Combination Acts, and the Act for preventing the emigration of artisans—which interfered with the freedom of labour quite as much as the Spitalfields Acts. These Acts had been passed, not in the interest of the labourers, but in the interest of the employers; they were known to operate severely against the working classes. If, it was argued, it were really desirable to establish free labour, the first step towards doing so should be the repeal of the Combination Acts. It

The Combination Acts.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 1546. [2] Ibid., vol. xi. pp. 433, 753, 793.

was unjust and impolitic to repeal a set of statutes, which the working classes desired to retain, because they interfered with free labour, and at the same time to retain another series of statutes, which the working classes desired to get rid of, and which equally interfered with the freedom of labour.[1]

The challenge, which was thus thrown out, was soon accepted. At the close of the session of 1823 Hume formally undertook to deal with the subject; and, at the commencement of 1824, he moved for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into it. The object of the law, which it was Hume's desire to investigate, may be very simply stated. The legislature had honestly desired to concentrate the manufactures of the world in Britain, and it had honestly concluded that the best means of doing so were to be found in securing the manufacturers a constant supply of cheap labour and a monopoly of skilled workmanship. With these objects it was made illegal for any body of workmen to meet, even peaceably, together for the purpose of discussing the rate of wages; it was made penal for an artisan to leave the kingdom, and the artisan who was even suspected of an intention of doing so was subjected to imprisonment. With the same objects the exportation of machinery was forbidden. These laws naturally created a good deal of irritation among the working classes, and they had not the merit of securing the result for which they were passed. Notwithstanding their existence on the statute book, workmen constantly combined to raise and keep up their wages, to regulate their hours of work, and to limit the right of their masters to employ apprentices. Such combinations were often followed by strikes; the strikes were often attended with serious breaches of the peace; they necessarily occasioned loss both to the employers and employed, and were attended with serious inconvenience to the community. Prosecutions had frequently taken place under the Combination Laws. The men had been prosecuted by the masters for combining to raise their wages; the masters had been prosecuted by the men for combining to reduce the wage-rate.

[1] See Ellice's speech, *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 379.

The results of these prosecutions had, however, been different. The law, in no instance, had proved strong enough to reach the masters; but the men had been frequently imprisoned for their combinations. This unequal contest had naturally produced dissatisfaction. The law was regarded as partial. The men felt that they "were not protected against the injustice of their masters, while the masters were protected from the combinations of the men."[1]

The emigration of artisans.

The law which prohibited the emigration of artisans had been equally unpopular and equally inoperative. Notwithstanding the law many able and intelligent artisans had gone abroad; it was difficult, if not impossible, to prevent their doing so; and the only effect which the law had was to deter artisans who had once left the country from returning home. The law, therefore, was to all intents and purposes useless. But, useless as it was, the artisans complained of its existence in the Statute Book. They were unable to see why they should be debarred from taking their labour to the best market, "whilst all other classes of the community are permitted to go abroad, and to take their capital with them, whenever they think proper."[2]

The exportation of machinery.

The principle on which the emigration of artisans was prohibited was similar to that on which the exportation of machinery was forbidden. It was more difficult to evade the latter than the former of these regulations. It was easy for a workman to leave the country, but it was difficult to smuggle out of it a bulky and heavy piece of machinery. Yet, though the difficulty of smuggling machinery was great, machinery was smuggled; and, where smuggling was prevented, foreign nations were driven to manufacture their machinery themselves instead of purchasing it from Britain. The law, therefore, in no case effected the object for which it was enacted, and the foreign rivals of the British manufacturer were deprived neither of machinery

[1] Authority for these statements will be found in the report of the select committee. (*Hansard*, vol. xi. p. 811.) The concluding quotation is from Hume's speech, *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 146.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xi. p. 813.

nor of skilled workmen. Hume consequently desired to repeal the Acts which prohibited the emigration of workmen, as well as those which prevented the exportation of machinery. He saw no reason why Britain should not become a great manufacturer of machinery, and add one more trade to the many industries which already flourished on her soil.[1]

In one respect Hume's motion was made at an unfortunate time. Soon after the commencement of the preceding recess the man who would undoubtedly have been his ablest and most authoritative supporter in the House passed away. An inflammation of the brain, probably attributable to hard work and acute thought, prematurely terminated the useful career of Ricardo, the member for Portarlington. In a comparatively short life Ricardo had made himself the first authority on all questions connected with political economy. He spoke in the House of Commons on such subjects with an influence which perhaps no other economist unconnected with office has ever gained in that assembly. He had long paid special attention to the Labour Laws; and he had been instrumental in promoting the Spitalfields Bill of the previous session. His death, therefore, deprived Hume of the most valuable assistance which he could possibly have received. Only two years before Ricardo's loss would have been irreparable. The change which had been made in the character of the Government during 1823 rendered it easy to repair it in 1824. Up to the date of Huskisson's promotion and Vansittart's supercession the Opposition, on all economical questions, had held more advanced views than the Government. From the date of Huskisson's promotion the views of the ministry on such subjects had been more advanced than those of the Opposition. Huskisson, in the present case, rose immediately after Hume; but he rose to support, not to oppose, his motion. The select committee which Hume desired was unanimously agreed to. It adopted, before the session was over, an exhaustive report. Postponing the expression of any defi-

Ricardo's death.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 145.

nite opinion on the policy of permitting the exportation of machinery, it recommended the entire repeal of all the laws which interfered either with the emigration of artisans or their return home; and it also recommended the repeal of the Combination Laws and the alteration of the "Common Law, under which a peaceable meeting of masters or workmen may be prosecuted as a conspiracy." It stated, however, that it would be necessary to pass a new enactment punishing summarily either masters or workmen "who, by threats, intimidation, or acts of violence, should interfere with that act of freedom which ought to be allowed to each party, of employing his labour or capital in the manner he may deem most advantageous." Bills based on these recommendations were shortly afterwards introduced into the House of Commons and became law. It is a striking proof of the revolution which had been silently effected in economical questions that these bills were passed without discussion. A whole system crumbled away without a voice being raised to defend or to extenuate it.[1]

The haste with which the bills were passed probably accounted for the extreme nature of some of their provisions. The House accepted measures which it had only imperfectly examined, and which it only partially understood. When the bills, however, became law their real nature was soon evident. Combinations increased in a way which had never been known before. The workmen imagined that the legislature had itself encouraged them to combine; the masters, in serious alarm, combined against the workmen. In Glasgow the workmen at a single factory struck work. The masters in the same trade, dreading an attack in detail, met together and agreed that, if the men at this factory did not return to their work on the following Monday, they would discharge all their own men from their employment. The masters kept their word. On the Monday ten thousand working men of Glasgow were thrown out of work; and the strike was crushed by this combination among the masters.[2]

Serious strike during the autumn of 1824.

[1] 5th Geo. IV., c. 95, 96, 97.

[2] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xii. p. 1303.

The masters had reason for the alarm which they undoubtedly felt. Trades unions had struck deeper root in Scotland than in any other part of the United Kingdom. The members of the unions took an oath to execute with zeal and alacrity any task or injunction which the majority of their brethren imposed upon them; and they instanced "the chastisement of nobs,[1] the assassination of oppressive and tyrannical masters, and the demolition of shops," as examples of the tasks which they might thus be enjoined to perform.[2] The Dublin unionists had, unfortunately, learned how to commit these outrages with impunity. If the curriers were offended with a master they appealed to the carpenters to avenge them. If the carpenters were offended they called on the curriers to repay their debt. Suspicion failed to fall on men of another trade; the helpless victim of the union was assassinated, and it was found impossible to detect the murderer.[3] Masters, moreover, were not the only persons whose lives were endangered by the existence of the union. If a workman did not obey the rules of the union he was made "uncomfortable." The elastic phrase was capable of having any meaning attached to it. A workman in Glasgow who had disregarded the wishes of the union was made "uncomfortable" by being shot.[4]

It was obviously necessary to take some cognisance of outrages of this character. A state of things which enabled an irresponsible committee to decree the murder either of an employer or of a fellow-workman could not be permitted to continue. Early in 1825 Huskisson drew atttention to the subject, and proposed the appointment of a select committee to inquire into it.[5] The committee was appointed. Petition after petition was presented, both from masters and men, the masters praying for the protection of the legislature, the men deprecating the re-enactment of the old law. But the com-

[1] De Quincey says—"Snobs, and its antithesis nobs, arose among the internal factions of shoemakers about 1814. Possibly enough the terms may have existed much earlier; but they were then first made known by a trial at some assizes which happened to fix the public attention."—Works, vol. iv. p. 191, note. According to Mr. Skeat (ad verb). the word snob is of Scandinavian origin.

[2] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xiii. p. 1402.

[3] Ibid., vol. xii. p. 1308.

[4] Ibid., vol. xiii. pp. 1402–1404.

[5] Ibid., vol. xii. p. 1288.

mittee felt that it was necessary to protect the masters against their workmen, the working classes against themselves. The House agreed with the recommendations of the committee. The old law was not re-enacted, but the provisions of the Act of the previous year were repealed. The Act of 1824 had legalised all combinations. The Act of 1825 enabled masters and workmen respectively to meet to discuss the rate of wages and the conditions of employment. But it prohibited any person doing any act, or making any threat, to induce any manufacturer to alter the rules of his factory, or any workman to accept, or leave any employment, or to join any club. Magistrates were given a summary jurisdiction over offenders. The bill which was thus introduced passed both Houses of Parliament without any material amendment; and the law which was thus made continued to regulate the relations of capital and labour for a period of more than forty years.[1]

Fresh Act in 1825.

The excesses which the unionists had in many cases committed, and which had led to an alteration in the Act of 1824, were partly attributable to the natural excitement of men suddenly finding themselves free from the provisions of an oppressive law. But the unionists would have been powerless if the growing prosperity, and the consequent demand for labour, had not made their services almost indispensable to their masters. Britain had never previously seen such a revival of trade as characterised the year 1824. The prosperity, said Lord Dudley, "extended to all orders, all professions, and all districts." It was "enhanced and invigorated by the flourishing state of all those arts which ministered to human comfort, and by those inventions by which man seemed to have obtained a mastery over Nature by the application of her own powers."[2] "Such is the prosperity at which the country has arrived," said Lord Francis Leveson-Gower in the House of Commons, "that I feel in some measure at a loss how to proceed: whether to give pre-

Extraordinary prosperity in 1824 and 1825.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiii. pp. 1400, 1458, 1462, 1478; 6 Geo. IV. c. 129.
[2] Ibid., vol. xii. p. 4.

cedence to our agriculture, which is the main support of our country; to our manufactures, which have increased and are increasing to a most unexampled extent; or to our commerce, which distributes them to the ends of the earth, and finds daily new outlets for the distribution and new sources of national wealth and prosperity."[1] "Nearly all property," wrote a contemporary chronicler, "had risen greatly in pecuniary value, and every branch of internal industry was thriving. Agricultural distress had disappeared; the persons employed in the cotton and woollen manufactures were in full employment; the various departments of the iron trade were flourishing; on all sides new buildings were in the course of erection; and money was so abundant that men of enterprise, though without capital, found no difficulty in commanding funds for any plausible undertaking."[2]

The evidence of prosperity, which could be traced in every portion of the kingdom, was naturally reflected in the condition of the revenue. In 1824 Robinson had anticipated a surplus of £1,050,000. He had remitted taxation which had involved an ultimate loss of £1,060,000 a year, and which had reduced the revenue of the year by £630,000. His surplus, therefore, ought not to have exceeded £420,000; it actually amounted to £1,437,744.[3] These figures made the duty of the finance minister in 1825 an easy and agreeable task. The expenditure of the year was placed at £56,001,842. The revenue of the year was estimated at £56,445,370.[4] The net surplus at

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 32.
[2] *Ann. Reg.* 1825, Hist., p. 2.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 721.
[4] The exact figures are as follows:—

Estimated Revenue.

Customs	£11,350,000
Excise	26,400,000
Stamps	7,100,000
Taxes	4,875,000
Post-office	1,500,000
Miscellaneous	750,000
Half-pay Trustees	4,470,370
	£56,445,370
Expenditure	56,001,842
Surplus	£443,528

£443,528. There was, however, every reason for hoping that the surplus in future years would be very much larger. The revenue of the country was not merely increasing, but the changes which had been made in the Budget of 1824 had hardly come into operation. The abolition of the bounties on linen goods, for instance, was gradual. Robinson estimated that the surplus of £443,528 in 1825 would increase to £864,000 in 1826, and to £1,254,000 in 1827. The large additional revenue which he thus expected in 1827 was partly attributable to a change which he proposed to make in the sugar duties. Less than two centuries ago sugar was a luxury which was enjoyed by the rich alone. The annual consumption of Great Britain only amounted in 1700 to 22,000,000 lbs. a year. The population was not doubled in the century; but the consumption of sugar increased tenfold. More than 220,000,000 lbs. of sugar were, on an average, retained for consumption in Great Britain in 1800 and 1801. The rapid growth in the consumption tempted finance ministers in want of money to place heavy import duties on the commodity. In the reign of Anne the duty only amounted to 3*s.* 5*d.* per cwt.; in 1780 it was raised to 6*s.* 8*d.*; in 1787 to 12*s.* 4*d.*; in 1791 to 15*s.*; and in 1806 to 30*s.* per cwt. If, however, the price of sugar was below 47*s.* per cwt. the Treasury was at liberty to reduce the duty to 27*s.* This arrangement was

The Budget of 1825.

Sugar.

Expenditure.

Interest of Debt	£27,233,670
Interest of Exchequer Bills	40,000
Sinking Fund	5,486,654
Dead Weight Annuity	2,800,000
Other charges on Consolidated Fund	2,050,000
Total Consolidated Fund	£37,610,324
Interest of Exchequer Bills	820,000
Army	7,911,751
Navy	5,983,126
Ordnance	1,376,641
Miscellaneous	2,300,000
Total	£56,001,842

—*Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 725.

productive of fraud and loss. Large quantities of sugar were annually brought to this country and re-exported; the drawback uniformly allowed on its exportation was calculated at the highest rate of duty, 30*s.* per cwt. A merchant, therefore, was at liberty, when the price was low, to import a cargo of sugar into Britain paying on it a duty of 27*s.* per cwt., and to re-export it almost immediately afterwards and receive a drawback of 30*s.* per cwt. The merchant gained, and the public lost, 3*s.* on each cwt. of the cargo. This singular system cost the country £300,000 a year. Robinson decided to reduce the duty permanently to 27*s.*, and to fix the drawback uniformly at the same amount. The additional £300,000 which he thus hoped to save accounted for the greatest portion of the increase which he expected to accrue in the surplus in 1826.[1]

The change, so far as it went, was dictated by common sense. It did not constitute any attack upon the old system of protection or any advance towards the new system of free trade. The other changes in the Budget were of a different character. The poorer householders were relieved from the operation of the house-tax and of the window-duty. Some of the minor taxes on horses and servants were repealed, and the loss to the revenue from these changes was placed at £276,000 a year.[2] The prosperity of the country had produced a large and unexpected demand for iron, and Robinson decided on reducing the duty from £6, 10*s.* to £1, 10*s.* a ton. He met "the narrow and shortsighted policy which would say, 'Let us use no iron but our own,' by

Repeal of assessed taxes and other duties.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 727. M'Culloch, ad verb. Sugar. The duties in the text are the duties on West Indian sugar. Heavy prohibitory duties, which were left untouched in 1826, were imposed on foreign sugar. I have followed in the text the account in M'Culloch. But the reader, who wishes to go minutely into the subject, should read Porter's elaborate analysis of the official figures in *Progress of the Nation*, p. 550.

[2] Houses assessed under £10 a year paid 1*s.* 6*d.* in the pound, and were now relieved from the house-tax; 171,000 persons benefited by this change. Persons occupying houses with less than seven windows were at the same time relieved from the window-tax; 636,000 persons benefited by this change.—*Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 743.

saying to the manufacturers in return, 'Use all the iron you can get.'" The welfare of the mercantile marine suggested the expediency of reducing the duty on hemp by one-half. These two reductions were estimated to cost the country £100,000 a year. The duty on coffee was at the same time reduced from 1*s.* to 6*d.* the pound.[1]

A still greater change was made in another respect. The high duties on spirits and wine had created an illicit traffic in these commodities, which all the efforts of the authorities had been unable to repress. "We have endeavoured," said Robinson, "to check the progress of this mischief by the most rigorous measures. We have surrounded the coast with ships and guards as with a wall of brass; we have imposed penalty upon penalty, and inflicted punishment upon punishment; but all in vain." The trade of the smuggler was pursued more actively than ever. Smuggling flourished in every quarter of the country. "Its active instruments haunt us wherever we go; they hover around our coast, they penetrate our harbours, they traverse the interior; they invade the splendid palace of the noble and the humble cottage of the poor; they offer their temptations in every quarter, and all classes of society yield to the seduction." In the South of England, Dutch gin and French brandy were landed on dark nights in quiet coves by armed men ready to battle with the coastguard for their property. In the North of England, Scotch whisky was smuggled across the border, and the excise officers were unable to cope with the evil. Robinson decided to meet an evil which the preventive system had been unable to repress by a large reduction of taxation; and he was encouraged to do so by the success which had already attended his exertions in the same direction. Illicit distillation in Ireland and Scotland had previously been as great an evil as smuggling in England. Illicit stills existed in every parish: the people fancied that the illegal whisky had a peculiar relish; and the severest laws proved incapable

Smuggling.

[1] West Indian coffee. The duties on East Indian and foreign coffee were reduced proportionally.

of remedying the evil. In 1823 Robinson decided on reducing the duties on Irish and Scotch whisky from 5*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* the gallon. Illicit distillation never recovered the blow.[1] The amount of spirits which paid tax was at once doubled, and the revenue suffered hardly any loss from the change.[2] It was a fair presumption that the smugglers would be best encountered with the same weapons which had already checked the progress of illicit distillation. Robinson decided on making large reductions in the duties on wine, cider, and spirits. The revenue, he estimated, would lose £1,000,000 a year by the changes which he thus proposed; but £1,000,000 was not an excessive price to pay for the extinction of smuggling.[3]

[1] The story of illicit distillation in Ireland has been illustrated in chap. ii. vol. i. of this work. For Scotland some readers will recollect Burns's complaint—

"Ye Irish lords, ye knights an' squires
Who represent our brughs an' shires,
An' doucely manage our affairs
In Parliament,
To you a simple Bardie's prayers
Are humbly sent.

. . . . . .

"Tell them whae hae the chief direction,
Scotland an' me's in great affliction
E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
On aquavitæ;
An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
An' move their pity.

. . . . . .

"Paint Scotland greetin' owre her thrissle;
Her mutchkin stoup as toom's a whissle:
An' d——d excisemen in a bussle
Seizin' a stell,
Triumphant crushin't like a mussel
Or lampit shell."

	Scotland.	Ireland.	Total.
[2] 1822 .	2,225,124 gallons.	2,910,483 gallons.	5,135,607 gallons.
1824 .	4,350,301 ,,	6,690,315 ,,	11,040,616 ,,

—*M'Culloch*, ad verb. Spirits.

[3] The changes were as follows:—The duty on French wine was reduced from 11*s.* 5½*d.* to 6*s.* a gallon; that on other wine from 7*s.* 7*d.* to 4*s.* The duty on British spirits was reduced from 10*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.*; the duty on cider from 30*s.* to 15*s.* The ultimate loss to the revenue was estimated as follows:—On wine, £230,000; spirits, £750,000; cider, £20,000. Total, £1,000,000. In addition to this loss, the reduction of the hemp duty cost £100,000, the

The Budget of 1825 was the natural corollary of the Budgets of 1823 and 1824; but the financial history of the three years was very remarkable. For the first time since the conclusion of the Great War the finances of the country had been conducted on an intelligible system. The old Sinking Fund had been abolished, and a new Sinking Fund, which the country had proved able to maintain, had been substituted for it. The funded debt had been reduced from £796,000,000 to £778,000,000; the unfunded debt from £38,000,000 to £31,000,000. In 1823 the window-tax had been reduced by one-half; in 1825 the poorer householders had been relieved from the pressure both of house-tax and window-tax. The manufacturing classes had been encouraged by the reduction of the duties on silk, wool, and iron. The consuming classes had been benefited by the reduction of duties on spirits, wines, coffee, and sugar. The useless bounties on the whale and herring fisheries had been abolished; the bounties on the linen manufacture had been repealed; and the selfish policy which vainly endeavoured to concentrate the carrying trade of the world in British bottoms had been modified. During the same period the Labour Laws had been repealed; and the working classes had, for the first time, been legally permitted to combine for the purpose of raising the rate of wages. Such great alterations in the commercial and industrial legislation of the kingdom had never previously been attempted by any minister. Changes of such importance were not again suggested for another twenty years. The free trader looks back at the legislation of 1823, 1824, and 1825 as the first admission of the principle which it is his especial object to enforce. These changes, however, great as they were, did not effect a perfectly free trade in any article. The reform of the Navigation Laws was based on the principle of reciprocity. The burden of taxation was in many cases alleviated; it was in no case reduced altogether. Differential

The commercial legislation of this period.

reduction of the coffee duty £150,000, and the alteration in the assessed taxes £276,000 a year. The whole loss, therefore, was £1,526,000 a year. The duty on iron had been prohibitory, and its reduction, therefore, involved no loss.—*Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 743.

duties were still maintained on articles of colonial and foreign produce. Huskisson and Robinson were both, for instance, willing to give the consumer cheap sugar; but they were both of them desirous to give the West India colonists a clear advantage in the sugar market.[1]

The Budget of 1825 was proposed on the 28th of February. The country was still enjoying an extraordinary prosperity. Every commodity was constantly rising in price; every security was continually increasing in value; and higher prices and a cheap money market were encouraging the extension of old industries and the promotion of new undertakings. The causes which produced this state of things were manifold. The severe depression of 1819 had been naturally followed by a reaction. The consuming classes

Causes of the prosperity of 1825.

[1] The other changes which Huskisson introduced into the commercial legislation of the country at this time were of the same nature. Foreign cotton goods, before 1825, could only be imported on a duty of £75, £67, 10*s.*, or £50 per cent., according to their quality. Huskisson proposed the admission of all foreign cotton goods on a duty of £10 per cent. The duty on foreign woollens varied from £50 to £67, 10*s.* per cent. Huskisson reduced them to an uniform duty of £15 per cent. The duty on linens fluctuated from £40 to £180 per cent. Huskisson simplified and reduced them, placing them all at £25 per cent. The duty on paper was prohibitory; the duty on bound books amounted to £6, 10*s.* and £5 the cwt. Huskisson reduced the duty on paper to "twice the amount of the excise duty;" he reduced the duties on books to £3, 10*s.* and £3 per cwt. respectively. The duty on glass amounted to £80 per cent. Huskisson reduced it to £20 per cent. The duty on glass bottles amounted to 16*s.* 2*d.* a dozen. Huskisson reduced it to 3*s.* The duty on foreign earthenware amounted to £75 per cent. Huskisson reduced the duty on plain porcelain to £15, and on ornamental china to £30 per cent. The duty on copper amounted to £54 a ton. Huskisson reduced it to £27 a ton. Zinc sold on the Continent for £20 a ton; the duty upon it in this country was £28; its selling price £45 a ton. Huskisson reduced the duty to £14 a ton. The duty on lead was £20 per cent. Huskisson reduced it to £15. The duty on manufactured articles not enumerated was £50 per cent.; the duty on unmanufactured articles not enumerated was £20 per cent. Huskisson reduced these duties to £20 and £10 per cent. respectively. These were the leading changes which Huskisson introduced into the Customs Laws. At the same time he relieved the maritime interest: 1, by repealing the quarantine duties; 2, by repealing the stamp duty payable upon the transfer either of a ship or of shares in a ship; 3, by reducing the stamp duty on debentures for the payment of drawbacks, &c.; 4, by abolishing all consular fees and paying all foreign consuls by salaries. The great speech in which Huskisson explained his elaborate scheme will be found in *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xii. pp. 1196–1222.

could not indefinitely postpone their demand for the produce of the looms of Manchester or the commodities of Birmingham; and a slight revival to trade indicated a return to better times. A rise in the price of corn gradually relieved the distress of the agricultural classes; and landlords, farmers, and labourers, rescued from absolute despair, began to spend a little more freely. The nation, passing from despondency to hope, found itself in a position to save. Foreign governments, reckless speculators, promoters of new companies were all ready to relieve it of its savings. The British nation was interested in the struggle of the Spanish Colonies for independence. The Spanish Colonies were quite willing that the British investor should show his interest by advancing them money. South America contained the richest mines which had been discovered in the world. British capital was invited to come forward and work them. It was impossible to resist the combined attractions of an appeal which promised liberty to a continent and 20 per cent. to an investor. The attractions were the greater because the rate of interest was steadily falling at home. A man who had placed his scanty fortune in the Navy 5 per cents. found his income in 1822 reduced by one-fifth. He had no alternative but to retrench in his establishment or to change his investment. Such an individual was naturally disposed to lend a ready ear to the temptations which were offered him in every newspaper. He subscribed to one of the numerous companies whose prospectuses crowded the advertisement columns of the morning papers. Nothing could exceed the apparent good fortune of the shareholders in these companies. The shares were pushed up to an astounding premium. The bubble wore attractive hues, it attained extraordinary proportions. Men found their capital doubled or even quadrupled in a single day, and blessed the movement which had provided them with a short and unexpected road to wealth.[1]

1 The price of Consols rose from 75¼ in January 1823 to 95 in January 1825. The joint stock companies formed in England in 1824 and in the beginning of 1825 had a nominal capital of £174,000,000. The *Times* and *Morning Chronicle* of the 23rd and 24th of January 1825 contained the prospectuses of thirty-five new companies. The reckless manner in which these shares were

The capital which was thus subscribed naturally imparted an accelerated impulse to every commercial undertaking. The new mines wanted machinery; the new navigation companies wanted vessels. Every new company gave fresh employment to some class of the population. The demand for iron increased so rapidly that the British ironmasters were unable to comply with it. The price of pig iron, in consequence of the demand, rose from £6 to £12 a ton. Other commodities besides iron were effected in a similar way. The price of cotton rose from 7½*d.* to 1*s.* 6½*d.* a lb.[1] The rise in prices continued through the whole of 1824 and the first few months of 1825. It was stimulated by the confidence which was everywhere felt. It seemed as easy to attain wealth by speculating in commodities as by speculating in shares. The profits of the speculator were almost illimitable. It was impossible to predict the dimensions which the bubble might attain, the height to which prices might be raised. Cheap money made speculation, moreover, exceptionally easy. A man with a little credit might obtain the use of large sums of money at 4 per cent. interest. It seemed mathematically demonstrable that wealth was easily attainable when money could be borrowed from one set of persons at 4 per cent. and invested with another set of persons at 10 or even 20 per cent. interest.

The mania continued to rage till the end of April 1825. About the end of April the rapid rise in prices was gradually checked. Cotton, wine, and silk had been imported in unusual quantities, and the addition to the supplies overtook the demand. The enormous mass of people who had speculated, on the assumption that the rise of prices would continue, suddenly found themselves confronted with a weaker market. The fall in prices naturally led to a fall in the value of shares. The joint stock companies

The causes which terminated it.

pushed up in the market may be seen from one or two examples. The market price of a share in the Anglo-Mexican Mine (£100 share, £10 paid) was, on the 11th of January 1825, £158. A £400 share (only £70 paid) in the Real del Monte sold for £1350. The price of other shares was pushed up almost to the same extent.—See *Ann. Reg.*, 1825, Hist., pp. 2, 3; Tooke's *History of Prices*, vol. ii. p. 146.

[1] Tooke's *Hist. of Prices*, vol. ii. p. 157.

found it necessary to call up some of their uncalled capital. Weak investors, unable to meet the calls, were compelled to sell their holdings. The sale of a few shares in a rising market would have had very little significance; it had much greater effect when the market was falling. Bold investors, confident that the crisis would soon pass, raised money on the shares which they declined to sell. Country bankers found themselves assailed with an unusual demand for money. The demand on the local banks created in its turn a demand on the Bank of England. At the end of August 1824 the circulation of the Bank of England slightly exceeded £20,000,000; the bullion in its coffers amounted to eleven millions and three-quarters. At the end of February 1825 the circulation of the bank had increased by three-quarters of a million; its bullion had decreased by three millions. Prudential considerations should have induced the Directors to restrict their business and to diminish their discounts. The Directors of the Bank, participating in the universal trust, increased their discounts and diminished their reserves. At the end of August 1825 the circulation of the Bank amounted to about nineteen millions four hundred thousand pounds. Its bullion had decreased to three millions six hundred thousand pounds.[1]

[1] The Bank account on the three dates was as follows—

31st of August 1824.

Circulation	£20,132,120	Securities	£20,904,530
Deposits	9,679,810	Bullion	11,787,430
Rest	2,880,030		
Total	£32,691,960	Total	£32,691,960

28th of February 1825.

Circulation	£20,753,760	Securities	£24,951,330
Deposits	10,168,780	Bullion	8,779,100
Rest	2,807,890		
Total	£33,730,430	Total	£33,730,430

31st of August 1825.

Circulation	£19,398,840	Securities	£25,106,030
Deposits	6,410,560	Bullion	3,634,320
Rest	2,930,950		
Total	£28,740,350	Total	£28,740,350

—Tooke's *History of Prices*, vol. ii. pp. 178, 382.

It was obvious that the position of the Bank was dangerous. Every day that passed in the autumn of 1825 increased the danger. The demand for discount increased; the country bankers, who had been tempted to lend their money on securities realisable at only a distant date, and who, on the faith of these securities, had issued their own notes, quailed at the unexpected pressure. A vague feeling of indefinite apprehension was succeeded by genuine alarm. One or two failures hastened the panic; a run commenced on the country bankers, and bank after bank was compelled to stop payment. At last, on the 5th of December, the great banking house of Sir Peter Pole & Co., in Bartholomew Lane, closed its doors. It was known that Pole & Co. had relations with forty-four country bankers, and it seemed impossible to predict the consequences of so stupendous a failure. The Funds fell. Lombard Street was filled with persons hastening to withdraw their deposits from their bankers, and the prevailing panic in this way increased the pressure. On the day after that on which Pole & Co. had failed three other banks of high repute closed their doors. Even old men, who had recollected the crisis of 1793, were appalled at the existing disasters.

The crash.

For ten days the panic continued. Weak establishments were swept away by the storm. Even solvent institutions staggered under the unexpected strain on their resources. On the eve of Christmas Day the Bank had hardly a million of treasure in its coffers. So sad a Christmas had rarely been celebrated in London. Long before it arrived the Directors of the Bank had urged on the ministry the expediency of resorting to exceptional measures; and the Cabinet had been deliberating on the policy of adopting the advice which timid counsellors were urging upon them—of suspending cash payments, of issuing Exchequer bills. "To their infinite credit," writes the most competent authority,[1] the Cabinet declined to take either course. The Mint was desired to expedite the coinage of new sovereigns; the Bank was encouraged to issue

[1] Tooke's *Hist. of Prices*, vol. ii. p. 169.

small notes for country circulation. Some old one-pound notes, accidentally discovered in a box in its vaults, were issued to the public; but cash payments were not suspended, Exchequer bills were not issued. The firm refusal of the ministry to bend to the storm probably inspired others with a little confidence. Towards the close of December the panic was stayed, and confidence was slowly restored. At the end of February the bullion in the Bank had again reached two millions and a half,[1] and the danger was evidently over. But the whole aspect of the commercial world had been changed by the violence of the storm. The most flourishing establishments had been wrecked in the panic hurricane, and the universal prosperity of 1824 had been succeeded by as widespread distress. The flood had subsided, but the country which the waters had desolated no longer smiled.

The ministry had stood firm during the storm; but the disaster had taught a lesson which it was impossible to ignore. The crisis had been obviously due to the feverish speculation which had preceded it; but the speculators had themselves been supported by the dangerous facility with which local banks, competing for custom, had advanced money on securities of every character. While the country was prosperous, the steadiest firms, dazzled by the general prosperity, had failed to perceive the risk attendant on these advances. The risk became plain enough when their own paper was returned to them for redemption, and the securities on which it had been issued became either unsaleable or saleable only at a loss. The ministry, tracing the disasters to the rash policy of the country banks, determined on the regulation of these establishments. Since 1792 every bank had been at liberty to issue £1 and £2 notes. The constant loss which it sustained from the forgery of these notes had induced the

The lesson of the crisis.

[1] The exact figures on the 28th of February 1826 were:—

Circulation	£25,467,910	Securities	£32,918,580
Deposits	6,935,940	Bullion	2,459,510
Rest	2,974,240		
Total	£35,378,090	Total	£35,378,090

Bank of England to suspend the issue of them. But the country banks had issued small notes of this description more actively than ever. In rural districts there was an almost indefinite demand for these notes, and the country bankers were, therefore, exposed to peculiar temptations to issue them. The ministry concluded that the best method of checking the excessive circulation of paper-money was to prevent the issue of notes of a smaller value than £5, and they accordingly decided on advising Parliament to adopt this remedy.

The country bankers were naturally alarmed at this decision. One of the main sources of their profits had arisen from the issue of £1 and £2 notes, and they saw that they were about to be deprived of this profitable business. The alarm was much greater in Scotland. Banking in Scotland had never been subject to the restrictions which had interfered with the constitution of joint stock banks in England. Scotch banks had, in consequence, obtained an importance which was not enjoyed by the English banks. Little towns in Scotland, which in England would have been thought incapable of supporting a bank, had frequently branch establishments of two or three Scotch banks. The paper which these banks issued was almost the only circulating medium in Scotland; and the £1 notes of the Scotch bankers, greasy with age and use, were received with greater confidence than the clean and crisp paper of the Bank of England. It was suddenly whispered that the Government proposed to stop the circulation of these venerable notes. From one end of Scotland to the other a cry of indignation was raised against the proposal. The Scotch resisted the destruction of their favourite currency with the fiery zeal with which, a century before, the Irish had refused to receive "Wood's halfpence." Huskisson, who was regarded as the author of the proposal, was denounced in every street in Edinburgh. Melville was blamed for disregarding Scotch interests and for assenting to the measure. Every man with Scotch blood in his veins or Scotch brogue on his tongue was ready to believe that the measure would

The suppression of small notes.

Indignation in Scotland.

ruin Scotland. Few Scotchmen, however, had either the skill or the knowledge which would have enabled them to explain their views upon the subject. Either from ignorance or indifference, Melville had assented to the obnoxious scheme. The forty-five members returned by Scotland represented, it must be recollected, Melville. How was it possible for Scotland to make herself heard except through Melville? The answer came from a quarter which no one could disregard. A century before Wood's halfpence had roused the spirit of the Dean of St. Patrick: a proposal to stop £1 notes roused the patriotism of the "Wizard of the North." Wood's halfpence had suggested the "Drapier's Letters:" Huskisson's proposal prompted the letters of "Malachi Malagrowther."

Sir Walter Scott was entertaining company at Abbotsford when the first news of the commercial crisis of 1825 reached him. He was growing old; his health was enfeebled; those whom he loved best were showing symptoms of decay; and he was gradually giving himself the greater leisure which his noble labours had so justly earned. Some rumours soon afterwards arrived that all was not well with the great publishing firms with which he had unfortunately connected himself. Constable was on his way to London to raise money on the business. Ballantyne was waiting uneasily in Edinburgh for tidings from Constable. Sir Walter Scott had official business of his own to perform in Edinburgh. He drove there from Abbotsford—"a cold journey to colder news." Things were going ill with Constable in London. Bankers, who refused to advance money on unexceptionable credit, would not accept even the MSS. of the "Waverley Novels" as a security. Collapse and ruin became, in these circumstances, only a question of time. The blow could not be averted; it could hardly be delayed. It came; and the great author, who had enchanted a world of readers, and amassed a fortune by his works, found himself in his old age, from no fault of his own except an over-trustful heart, worth many thousand pounds less than nothing.

Sir Walter Scott.

For the moment the good old man was stunned by the blow.

He was afraid to show himself in the streets; afraid to think what others were saying of him. His fears were soon removed. The sternest critic had nothing but good to say of the author of "Waverley." The stunning blow quickly lost its deadening effect. Sir Walter had others besides himself to think of—his wife, ill, dying, as it proved; his youngest daughter, delicate, and nursing her dying mother; a little grandchild, helplessly ill at a distant seaside town in England; his creditors, to whom legally he owed so much, with whom he could so easily have made terms of accommodation. Animated by these considerations, Scott resumed the work which he had already commenced, and, forgetting his own sorrows, threw himself into "Woodstock." Little progress had, however, been made with the story when the rumour spread that the ministry was meditating an attack on Scotch currency. Scott was under obligations to the Scotch bankers for the consideration which they had shown to him during his distress. His strong Scotch prejudices were moved by what he thought an injustice to Scotland, and he probably longed for sterner work than "Woodstock"—work which would carry him out of his own troubles, and compel him to forget his own embarrassments. These various considerations induced him for the moment to throw aside the novel, and adopt the character of "Malachi Malagrowther," a Scotch tradesman.

The letters of Malachi Malagrowther.

Malachi Malagrowther had no great pretensions to economical knowledge, but he had an inexhaustible fund of humour, and he was a Scotchman to the backbone. He complained that he had discovered a deliberate design on the part of England to affront Scotland; and all his fellow-countrymen believed him. He saw a confirmation of his suspicions in the suppression of the Board of Customs in Edinburgh and its consolidation with the London Board. He declared that the substitution of sovereigns for notes would fill Scotland with a new race of highwaymen. Arguments of this character would have had little weight in a grave assembly of educated politicians; but they were exactly suited to feed the flame which was burning from one end of

Scotland to the other. It was in vain that Croker, the Secretary to the Admiralty, the ablest literary man in the Administration, writing under the name of the "Bradwardine Waverley," endeavoured to reply to "Malachi Malagrowther." It was possible to answer Malachi Malagrowther's arguments; it was impossible to resist his humour. The ministry had to abandon the intention which they had formed of extending to Scotland the scheme of suppressing small notes in England.[1] In the same three months in which the great reverse had fallen on him, and in which he had learned for the first time the fatal nature of his wife's illness, Scott had added a new leaf to his laurel crown, and had won his great political triumph. Single-handed he had encountered the ministry, and single-handed he had beaten them.[2]

Though Scott had compelled the ministry to abandon its intention to suppress small notes in Scotland, it proceeded with the measure for England. All the members of it were unanimous in desiring to stop the issue of small notes; but they were not equally unanimous on other points. Huskisson desired to take a step towards the establishment of a bi-metallic standard, by compelling the Mint to accept packets of silver to the value of £50 and upwards, and by allowing the Mint receipts for these

The suppression of small notes confined to England.

[1] The circulation of small Scotch notes in England was prohibited two years afterwards by the Act of 1828. The debates on the bill will be found in *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xix. 980, 1054, 1380.

[2] There is nothing more touching in the whole of Scott's life than the letter in which he reconciled himself with Croker after their sharp encounter. "As for my affairs," he writes, "I can safely say that no oak ever quitted its withered leaves more easily than I have done what might be considered as great wealth. I wish to God it was as easy for me to endure impending misfortunes of a very different kind. You may have heard that Lockhart's only child is very ill, and the delicate habits of the unfortunate boy have ended in a disease of the spine, which is a hopeless calamity, and in my daughter's present situation may have consequences on her health terrible for me to anticipate. To add to this, though it needs no addition—for the poor child's voice is day and night in my ear—I have, from a consultation of physicians, a most melancholy account of my wife's health, the faithful companion of rough and smooth, weal and wo, for so many years. So if you compare me to Brutus in the harsher points of his character" (Croker had quoted the 'Et tu, Brute,' to him), "you must also allow me some of his stoical fortitude.—'No man bears sorrow better.'"—Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 616.

packages to circulate as currency. Wellington had the good sense to see that Huskisson's recommendation would virtually lead to the establishment of two different standards, and that it was, therefore, inadmissible.[1] Bexley, naturally a little jealous of the supercession of his own policy, thought that the speculations which had caused the crisis were partly attributable to the commercial policy of the Government.[2] Thus, on these points, ministers held different views, but they were unanimously resolved to stop the issue of small notes, and to allow those which were already in circulation to circulate only until 1829.[3] The debate on this proposal, which was opened by Robinson, occupied two nights. The ministry approached the contest with considerable trepidation. It was expected that the country bankers, the City merchants, and the country gentlemen would all combine against Robinson's propositions.[4] To a certain extent these apprehensions were well founded. Bankers, merchants, and country gentlemen were all prepared to oppose Robinson; but hardly any two of them were agreed as to what should be done. Some thought that Robinson's proposals would be inoperative; others that they would be mischievous; others, again, that they were premature. Some of them were in favour of a paper currency; others were opposed to it. These various opinions weakened the force of the opposition to the Government. The leading members of the Whig party had the courage to support the proposals of the Cabinet. Reinforced by Brougham and Mackintosh, ministers obtained an easy victory over bankers, merchants, and their own habitual supporters. Robinson's proposal was carried by 222 votes to 39.[5] The result of this division virtually decided the success of the measure; and Baring, whose reputation in the House of Commons and whose position in the City had placed him at the head of the opposition to it, announced his intention of abandoning the struggle.[6]

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. pp. 98, 135.
[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 359.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 193.
[4] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 97.
[5] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 354.
[6] *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Hist., p. 18.

The contest was renewed, however, in a very singular way. Hudson Gurney, the member for Newton, a partner in the great Norfolk bank of Gurney & Co., had been one of the warmest opponents of the measure of the ministry. Gurney had persuaded himself that the suppression of £1 notes would reduce the country to a state of destitution. Robinson's resolution, however, had been adopted, and all that Gurney could hope to do was to limit its application. He accordingly endeavoured to except from it the small notes of the Bank of England. His motion was defeated by a majority of 66 votes to 7; but on the following day, when Robinson's resolution was reported, he reintroduced his proposal on the report.[1] The feeling of the House against him was so strong that he did not venture on a division. Robinson's resolution was duly reported, and the adoption of the ministerial scheme in its integrity appeared certain. Hudson Gurney was not, however, discouraged by his failure in Parliament. He told Robinson that, if his own proposals were not accepted, he would send up half a million of bank-notes to London and insist on their exchange into sovereigns.[2] The ministers were ready enough to meet Hudson Gurney's arguments in the House of Commons, but they were afraid of the consequences of a new drain of bullion from the Bank. Three days after Hudson Gurney's amendment had been rejected without a division, Robinson came down to the House and offered to compromise the matter. He was prepared to allow the Bank of England to continue the issue of small notes till the 10th of the following October.[3]

Hudson Gurney's action.

With the modification which Hudson Gurney's opposition had necessitated, the small notes bill was carried through all its stages. But the small notes bill formed only one portion of the ministerial programme. Nothing was more striking in the recent financial crisis than the different manner in which it had affected Scotland and

Scotch and English banking systems.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. pp. 356, 406.

[2] So says Greville, vol. i. p. 80; and no other explanation of Robinson's change of front has ever been offered.

[3] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 537. Greville, vol. i. pp. 79–81.

England respectively. In England seven London banks and seventy country banks had closed their doors; in Scotland not a bank had failed. Prudent men naturally imagined that some cause must exist for the different results in the two countries; and there was one evident distinction which it was impossible to overlook. In England, no bank, except the Bank of England, having more than six partners could be legally formed. In Scotland, on the contrary, banks could be composed of an indefinite number of shareholders, and no institution had received any monopoly or especial privilege. In Scotland some thirty banks of large capital, with branches in every considerable town, amply supplied their clients with every requisite accommodation. In England four or five hundred banks,[1] in private hands, afforded far inferior conveniences to the Scotch banks. The Scotch banks had, without exception, stood firm throughout the crisis. Nearly one-tenth part of the English banks had been overwhelmed by the storm, and the credit of the remaining nine-tenths was seriously impaired. With these facts before them, ministers naturally desired either to engraft the Scotch system on England, or to enlarge the basis on which the English banks were constituted. They could not, however, do so without infringing the Bank charter—without, therefore, previously obtaining the consent of the Bank of England. The Bank directors, on their part, not unnaturally, objected to an arrangement which interfered with the monopoly of the Bank. The ministry had nothing to offer them, in return for their concession, but the opportunity of instituting branch establishments in the provinces. For a fortnight Liverpool and Robinson, who undertook the negotiation for the Government, were unable to shake the determination of the Bank. At the end of the fortnight the directors offered to accept the proposal on condition that the new banks were not allowed within sixty-five miles of the

Establishment of joint stock banks in England.

[1] A Return of 1843 (Parl. Papers, No. 85, Sess. 1843) gives the number of private banks as 455 in 1825 and 465 in 1826.

metropolis. The ministry assented to this compromise; a bill to give effect to it was brought into Parliament, and ultimately became law.[1]

The small notes bill and the alterations in the Bank charter were both remedial measures. However efficacious they might ultimately prove in preventing the recurrence of a crisis, they could by no possibility relieve the existing distress. Every one was complaining of the scarcity of money; it was difficult to get the best paper discounted; and the great commercial houses, which had stood firm during the recent storm, were nervously apprehensive of the immediate future. The City merchants were unanimous in their views as to the course which should be pursued. In 1793 and in 1811 the ministry, confronted with a similar crisis, had raised money by the issue of Exchequer bills for the relief of the commercial interests. Precedent, it was urged, justified and necessity dictated the adoption of this course. The country gentlemen agreed with the merchants. It was one of the cardinal articles of their creed that Pitt was always right. Pitt had issued Exchequer bills in 1793. It could not, therefore, be wrong to issue Exchequer bills in 1826. The ministry, however, arrived at a different conclusion. There were already thirty millions of Exchequer bills outstanding. It was with great difficulty that they could be kept at par. Any addition to them would inevitably lead to their depreciation. The depreciated bills would be paid into the Exchequer as revenue. The revenue would, in consequence, suffer; and a new difficulty would arise. Exchequer bills, moreover, would be useless to the merchants unless they were cashed by the Bank. The intervention of the Bank was, therefore, in any case necessary. Why should not the Bank, therefore, "take the whole affair into their own hands at once, issue their notes on the security of goods instead of issuing

The ministry urged to issue Exchequer bills.

[1] For the correspondence between the Ministry and the Bank see *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 103; *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Chron., p. 57*; and Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 356. See also *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 450, &c., for the debate on the introduction of the bill.

them on Exchequer bills, such bills being themselves issued on that security?"[1]

The argument of the ministry was excellent; but there was one weak point in it. The reasoning rested on the assumption that the Bank would make advances on goods: the Bank positively declined to do anything of the kind. The London merchants in their distress applied to the Treasury, and the Treasury referred them to the Bank of England. They applied to the Bank, and the Bank directors referred them to the Treasury. In these circumstances, on the 23rd of February, Wilson, one of the members for the City, announced his intention of moving, a few days afterwards, for a select committee to inquire into the distress of the commercial world. The House seemed unanimous in Wilson's favour till Canning rose. He had, perhaps, frequently spoken with more eloquence; he never spoke with more effect. He defended his colleagues and himself against the charge of indifference which had been freely brought against them, and he persisted in retaining his own views in opposition to the opinion of the majority. "As an individual member of Parliament, he might perhaps have yielded to the urgent necessity of the case, and abandoned what he conceived to be the strict line of his duty, when assailed by the strongest sense of misery, supported with all the eloquence of distress. But, as a responsible minister of the crown, if his judgment is not convinced of the thorough propriety of the course to be recommended, it became his duty to waive every other consideration, to persevere in his determination, and to leave to the Parliament of the country to adopt such measures as to them may seem expedient, and to place measures which he does not think it right to sanction, in hands more capable of carrying them into execution."[2] The threat of resignation was not expected by the country gentlemen, who had temporarily ranged themselves in opposition to the ministry. It was not expected

They refuse to issue them.

[1] See the argument, admirably stated, in a letter from Peel to the Duke of Wellington, in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 144.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. pp. 698, 726.

by the Bank directors, who had hitherto declined to make advances on goods. The country gentlemen probably thought that they had gone a little too far. The Bank directors saw the necessity of yielding. Five days after Canning's declaration in the House of Commons, on the eve of Wilson's threatened motion, Robinson was able to announce that the Bank had acquiesced in the principle of the measure which the Government had urged on them. The Bank undertook, on certain conditions being conceded, to make the necessary advances;[1] the Government undertook to hold them harmless to the extent of three millions, if they purchased that amount of Exchequer bills in the open market;[2] and the crisis, which had threatened the existence of the ministry, quietly passed away.[3]

The severity of the crisis had been subdued, and the ministry mistook the calm which succeeded it for prosperity. "The violence of the storm," said Robinson, on 13th March, in moving the Budget, "is over; the clouds have begun to disperse, and by the very conflict of the elements the atmosphere has to a certain degree been cleared and purified." These Utopian views won for him some derision. Cobbett sneered at "Prosperity" Robinson, who refused to credit the evidence of distress which was everywhere perceptible around him. But, however much some persons were disposed to sneer at the minister who persisted in contemplating the sunny side of the prospect, no one

The Budget.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 920 *seq.* The conditions on which the Bank made the advances were that a short Act should be introduced, enabling persons in possession of goods—being factors or agents—to pledge them with the Bank as effectually as if they were the actual owners. By the common law an agent or factor having goods in his possession could not pledge them.—*Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Hist., pp. 41, 42.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Hist., p. 38.

[3] Lord Liverpool seems to have been the chief obstacle to the issue of Exchequer bills. He thought himself personally pledged against their issue, and was bent on retiring from office if the question were carried against him. Peel thought his decision to retire wrong, but was quite clear that he could not be left to go alone. It was obvious, therefore, that the existence of the ministry was imperilled; and this knowledge, it is thought, induced Canning to make his very decided declaration. See an interesting letter in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 143; and Croker's account of the crisis, ibid., p. 209.

ventured to dispute the simple financial statement which he submitted to the House of Commons. The expenditure of the year was placed at £56,328,421; the revenue at £57,043,000;[1] the surplus at rather more than £700,000. A strange mischance had, however, already disposed of this surplus. Up to 1825 the duty on tobacco had been fixed at 4*s.* in the pound. By an oversight one-fourth of the duty had been allowed to lapse in the July of that year. The persons interested in the tobacco trade were naturally clamorous to know whether the ministry proposed to restore the tax to its original rate. They were temporarily reassured on learning that ministers would do nothing without the sanction of Parliament. For half a year, therefore, the duty was continued at the reduced rate. The reduction, it was found, "had no inconsiderable effect" in diminishing smuggling. Robinson, in consequence, decided that he could not make a better use of the surplus than by continuing the reduction in the tobacco duty. He calculated that his decision would entail a loss of £600,000 a year. and would, therefore, almost entirely absorb his estimated surplus.[2]

A simple Budget of this character exactly suited the temper of the House, and Robinson's proposals were in consequence adopted. Yet there was something ludicrous in the financial arrangements of the year. A starving population was crying aloud for cheap bread, and Robinson responded by cheapening their tobacco. There was, however, a large number of persons in Parliament who seriously desired to alleviate the existing distress by reducing the price of corn. In the session of 1825, Whitmore, the member for Bridgnorth, had drawn attention to the state of the corn laws, and had succeeded in eliciting from Huskisson the declaration that he would be prepared in the following session to deal with the subject.[3] Early in 1826 Lord King described the corn laws as a "job of the landed interest—the most gigantic job in the whole history of misrule," and moved a resolution

The corn laws.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 1321. [2] Ibid., p. 1321.

[3] The debate will be found in *Hansard*, vol. xiii. p. 252; Huskisson's declaration in ibid., p. 281.

pledging the Lords to take their revision into consideration at an early period. Liverpool agreed that it would be desirable to revise the corn laws, but declared that he had no immediate intention of doing so.[1] Liverpool's declaration was not entirely satisfactory to any one. The country gentlemen anticipated from it a fresh attack on their own interests; the free traders feared the indefinite postponement of the question. Instructed already by Brougham in the art of petitioning, Lord King, night after night, brought up petition after petition against "the job of jobs," and raised little debates on each fresh petition. The same course was soon imitated in the House of Commons; and on the 18th of April, Whitmore moved that the House should resolve itself into a committee on the corn laws. Huskisson rose, immediately after Whitmore's resolution had been seconded, to deprecate its discussion. The Parliament, which had been elected in 1820, was dying of extreme old age—it had already reached its seventh session—and its immediate dissolution was, therefore, inevitable. There was, however, "a coincidence of feeling, amounting almost to a common understanding, that there were certain questions of great magnitude, importance, and difficulty," which it was not desirable to raise in "an expiring Parliament." "If there was one question more unfit than another to be entertained at the present moment, it was this relating to the corn laws. No question was more calculated to agitate the House, and to set afloat in the country notions which might give rise to general inconvenience." The House would, in short, be wise to avoid entering on the subject till it had more leisure at its disposal than it could at present command; and he, on his part, would undertake to deal with it in the next session of Parliament. The House jeered at the suggestion of further delay, but it adopted Huskisson's advice. Whitmore's motion was defeated by a large majority;[2] and the difficult question of free trade in corn was apparently postponed for another year.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xiv. pp. 10–19.

[2] By 250 votes to 81. *Hansard*, vol. xv. p. 370. The debates on Lord King's petition will be found scattered through vol. xiv.

The ministry, however, was unable to adhere to the intention which Huskisson had announced. The distress which was prevalent in the manufacturing districts had already led to universal discontent. Every description of trade was dull. The imports and exports were largely reduced.[1] Thousands of working men were thrown out of employment, and thousands of others were compelled to accept lower wages. Dull trade naturally led to discontent. The dissatisfaction among the employers of labour induced an attack on Huskisson's free trade measures; the dissatisfaction among the working classes produced an outcry against machinery. The table of the House of Commons was covered with petitions against the importation of foreign silks; and the time of the House was occupied for two long nights in debating their prayer. The ministry, however, successfully defended its measures of the previous year. Huskisson delivered a masterly speech in favour of free trade; Canning made a warm and brilliant defence of Huskisson. The most influential members of the Opposition supported, or abstained from opposing, the ministry; and a large majority ultimately adhered to the policy of free trade.[2] The employers had been successfully resisted. It proved less easy to deal with the workpeople. In the last week of April a large number of weavers, rudely armed with staves and scythes, assembled on some high land in the vicinity of Blackburn, and commenced destroying the machinery at outlying mills. Gathering confidence as they advanced, and continually increasing in strength, they entered Blackburn, held in check the few troops who were hastily collected to preserve order, and continued the work of destruction which they had set themselves. On the next day the riotous proceedings commenced in Manchester. Mills were burned, machinery was destroyed, and for a short time the great city was in possession of a mob. Four days of continual disturbance con-

Dissatisfaction

and disturbances.

[1] The imports, from £42,660,954 in 1825 to £36,174,350 in 1826; the exports, from £38,077,330 to £30,847,528. M'Culloch, ad verb. "Imports and Exports."

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. pp. 733–859.

vinced the authorities that decisive measures were necessary. Large bodies of troops were collected; they were allowed to fire on the people, and the riot was checked by these measures. But disorder continued to recur throughout the summer. More than a thousand power-looms were destroyed, and the county was subjected to an expense of some £20,000 as compensation for the destruction.[1]

These disturbances compelled the ministry to reconsider its policy. It could no longer ignore with safety the condition of the working classes. The weavers of Manchester directly attributed their distress to the operation of the corn laws. Whether they were right or not, the ministry could not leave their complaints unredressed on the eve of a general election. On the 1st of May, a fortnight after the defeat of Whitmore's motion, Liverpool intimated that Parliament ought not to separate without taking some means of increasing the supply of corn. Some hundreds of thousands of quarters of corn were bonded in Liverpool and in other ports, which, under the existing law,[2] could not be thrown into the market. The Prime Minister considered that this corn might at once be released, and that the Executive Government might be empowered to admit a further supply of foreign corn. On the same evening Canning made a similar announcement in the House of Commons, and undertook to make a definite proposal on the subject on the following day.[3] The proposal was not adopted without serious opposition. Lethbridge, the usual champion of the agricultural interest, met the proposition at the outset with a motion for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the causes of the existing distress.[4] Lethbridge's motion occupied the greater portion of a long sitting. It was ultimately rejected by a large

The ministry compelled to deal with the corn laws.

1 *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Chron., pp. 63, 70, 111, 128.

2 As the price of wheat had not since 1822 ever reached the price of 80*s.* a quarter, the Act of 1822 had never come into force; and the Act of 1815, under which wheat could not be imported till the price stood at 80*s.*, was still in operation.

3 *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xv. pp. 746, 764.

4 *Hansard*, vol. xv. p. 791.

majority, and the House agreed to admit bonded corn into the home market on payment of a 12*s.* duty.[1]

The House had adopted the first of the two proposals of the ministry. But the country gentlemen met the second with a much sharper opposition. Under the existing law the ports, in no circumstances, could be opened before the 15th of August. The averages of the preceding quarter, taken on the 14th of May, regulated the policy of the succeeding three months; and, whatever the prospects of the coming harvest might prove, whatever the price of corn might be, the country would have patiently to wait till the middle of August for any remedy. In 1818 "a fatal surplus" of 2*d.* in the pound in the averages had allowed the importation of foreign wheat during the entire summer,[2] and had in consequence effected a considerable reduction in the price of corn. It was possible that the exact reverse might happen in 1826, and that the low average in May or a low average in August might prevent the importation of corn, either through the summer or through the autumn, long after the price of wheat exceeded 80*s.* a quarter. The existing law rendered the country constantly liable to such a result. But, in ordinary seasons, Government and the legislature deliberately faced the inconveniences attendant upon it. It was, however, one thing to contemplate the existence of the high price of corn for a few weeks, when the labouring classes were fully employed; it was a different thing to face such a contingency when the industrial classes were unable to find work. Corn was already rising steadily in price; it was too early to predict the yield of the harvest; and ministers shrank, accordingly, from the responsibility of parting from the legislature without providing for the possibility of famine.

The Ministry authorised to admit foreign corn.

Something, indeed, had been done already. The admission into the markets of the corn already in bond was undoubtedly beneficial. But the whole amount of corn in bond did not

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xv. pp. 828, 830. Lethbridge was beaten by 214 votes to 82.
[2] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. p. 81, and vol. iii. p. 63.

exceed 300,000 quarters, and the quantity was not sufficient to have any great effect on prices. In addition, therefore, to the admission of the bonded corn, ministers desired to be vested with a discretionary power, enabling them to sanction the import of foreign corn. They originally intended that no such sanction should be given unless the price of wheat exceeded 65*s.* a quarter, and that no corn should be admitted without the payment of a heavy duty. But the strong opposition of the country gentlemen induced them to modify this portion of their proposal; and they ultimately decided to make no mention either of duty or price, and simply to sanction the import of a limited quantity—500,000 quarters—of foreign corn. The proposal, thus amended, proved a little less offensive to the country gentlemen. In its original shape it had looked too like a new corn law. In its amended form it was adopted as an inevitable expedient in a temporary crisis. But its adoption only took place after a vigorous debate. The resolution, pledging the House to a bill, was only carried after two nights' discussion.[1] The bill, which was founded on the resolution, was resolutely contested at almost every stage. The struggle was renewed in the House of Lords, and the measure was not finally passed till the end of May.[2]

The general election of 1826.

The long contest was hardly over when Parliament was dissolved. The country was thrown into all the turmoil of a general election. The electors had much to reflect upon in the past history of the previous years; but there were two subjects immediately before them which exceeded all others in interest and importance. The great question which was disturbing the minds of men was the advisability of relieving the Roman Catholics from the disabilities under which they laboured. Its history will be fully related in another chapter. It is sufficient in this place to state that the differences upon it had already brought the Government to the verge of ruin, and that the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xv. pp. 918, 971, 1004.
[2] Ibid., pp. 1053, 1122, 1135, 1139, 1366.

anti-Catholic[1] members of the Cabinet were as much opposed to their Catholic colleagues as to their regular opponents. In 1825 every one had expected that the general election would have been fought on the Catholic question alone. The events of 1826 had, however, given new importance to the subject of the corn laws. It was felt that the provisional arrangement, which the ministry had just made, had struck a fatal blow to the existing system; and protectionists and free traders were united, at least, in agreeing that something should be done.

Huskisson had made up his mind that the trade in corn should be freed from all unnecessary restraints; and, amidst the excitement of a contested election, he took his Liverpool constituents into confidence. Those of his colleagues who were opposed to the novel doctrines which he favoured were staggered at his statements, and one more cause of open difference arose between the two sections of which the Cabinet was composed.[2] If, however, the Tory section of the Cabinet had reason to complain of Huskisson's premature statement, the Liberal members of the ministry had at least equal grounds for objecting to the conduct of their Tory colleagues. Ever since 1811 Lord Palmerston had been member for the University of Cambridge. Ever since the autumn of 1809 he had discharged the duties of Secretary at War. His rare industry, his unassuming manners, his excellent judgment, and his admirable temper had made him a universal favourite, and nothing but his own diffidence had interfered with his rapid advancement. Palmerston had a right to expect that every exertion would be used by his party to secure his return for Cambridge. He had the mortification to find that every exertion was being made to defeat him. Goulburn, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Copley, who had commenced his remarkable political career as Attorney-General, did their utmost to oust him and his colleague Bankes from their seats. From the autumn of 1825 to the summer of 1826 the

[1] These epithets are used here in the sense in which they were used in 1826. Persons in favour of emancipation were classed as Catholic statesmen; persons opposed to it, as anti-Catholic.

[2] See Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 342.

candidates were engaged in an incessant canvass; and the Tories forgot all they owed to the Secretary at War in their bitter intolerance for his sympathy with the Roman Catholics. Even members of the Cabinet took part in the unnatural contest. Liverpool, indeed, stood aloof; Wellington and Peel condemned the cabal; but the Chancellor, Bathurst, and other members of the Administration openly aided the discreditable attempt of the Attorney-General and Irish Secretary to wrest a seat from the Secretary at War. The cabal failed. Copley was, indeed, returned at the head of the poll; but the Whigs rallied in Palmerston's support, and secured his election. Contests of this description, however, leave their traces behind them long after their immediate incidents are forgotten. The Cambridge election added one more to the many sources of difference which distracted the ministry, and alienated the most promising of its younger members from "the stupid old Tory party."[1]

The events of the Cambridge election are worth remembering from the illustration which they afford of the distractions of the Ministry; the other incidents of the general election of 1826 were not remarkable. The Opposition gained no ground. Brougham failed in an attempt to carry his native county of Westmoreland; Cobbett was defeated at Preston; Hunt, in Somersetshire; Lord John Russell was beaten in Huntingdonshire; and no impression was made on the ministerial majority. The ministry had nothing to fear from the votes of its opponents in the new Parliament, which assembled in the autumn. The Tories swarmed behind the ministerial benches, "bawling out the memory and praises of Pitt,"[2] and applauding every speech which came from the less Liberal section of the Cabinet. The short autumn session was, however, chiefly occupied by discussions on the foreign policy of the Government. The ministry obtained an indemnity for admitting into the markets during the recess a greater quantity of foreign cereals than the

[1] Lord Palmerston's own expression to his brother after the election.—Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 171.

[2] Ibid., vol. i. p. 171.

Act of the previous session had contemplated.[1] The great questions which had been raised at the general election were postponed till after the Christmas holidays; and the House adjourned on the 13th of December till the 8th of February.

The year which was thus fast drawing to a close had been eventful: it had, on the whole, been a disastrous one to the country. The nation no longer enjoyed the exceptional prosperity in which it had lately revelled, and dull trade and low wages were everywhere provoking dissatisfaction and discontent. In the distant possessions of Britain, however, things were proceeding more prosperously. A war, which had arisen with the Burmese, which will be more properly described in a separate chapter devoted in another volume to Indian matters, was brought to a successful conclusion. A foul stain was immediately afterwards wiped off the British arms on the West Coast of Africa. For more than a century and a half the British had possessed a solitary fort on the Coast of Guinea, know as Cape Coast Castle. The possession, situated only a short distance from the equator, was singularly unhealthy. It was surrounded by the Fantee tribes, and it was in the immediate neighbourhood of the Ashantees, a native tribe which had been gradually acquiring strength and importance. At the commencement of the nineteenth century the Ashantees had virtually subdued their weaker neighbours and had overrun the Fantee territory. The Fantees, defeated in repeated battles, retired under the walls of the British fort; and the Governor, with some imprudence, taking part in the fray, fired on the Ashantee warriors. The British were thus brought, for the first time, into collision with the powerful race which was virtually establishing its supremacy on the Coast of Guinea. Neither side was, however, desirous of prosecuting the war. The British, on their part, had no resources on the spot to enable them to do so; the Ashantees shrank from a contest with the white man. They consented to receive a consul at their capital, Coomassie; they arranged with him the terms of a treaty which was satisfactory to both

The Ashantee War.

[1] 7 & 8 Geo. IV. c. 3.

parties, and they professed a desire to establish peaceful relations with the British. Unfortunately, while the Consul (Dupuis) was arranging terms of accommodation with the Ashantees, the Governor of Cape Coast Castle (Smith) was negotiating a close alliance with the Fantees. Unfortunately, moreover, Sir Charles M'Carthy, who in 1822 was sent out as Governor of the Gold Coast, adopted the policy of his predecessor. M'Carthy had the folly to defy the power of the Ashantees, and to encourage the Fantees to rise in revolt. The Ashantees, almost driven to war, seized a British sergeant, placed him in prison, and, after six weeks' confinement, beheaded him. But the Ashantees did more than put an inoffensive non-commissioned officer to death. They showed by their conduct that they fully realised the difficulties of the struggle in which they were about to engage, and that they were prepared to make the greatest exertions for the purpose. The King of Ashantee summoned all his vassals to his standard, propitiated the gods with human sacrifices, and boasted that M'Carthy's skull should adorn his war-drum. Setting the huge force which he had collected in rapid motion, he marched upon Cape Coast Castle.

M'Carthy had precipitated a war for which he was unprepared. War, however, being inevitable, he endeavoured to secure the co-operation of any savage tribes who were ready to become his allies. With some difficulty he succeeded in collecting a "very undisciplined rabble;" and, with this rabble and a few hundred regular troops, he took the field. The force which he had thus obtained was "ill-equipped;" it had no means of transporting either ammunition or provisions; it probably would have been incapable of moving in any country; it was wholly unsuited for moving "through the sloughs, the bush, and the rivers which intersected the country which was the scene" of the war. Yet M'Carthy, with singular imprudence, plunged into the bush. The swamps were so bad that the men sank knee-deep into the mud at every step. The natives, who were employed to carry the ammunition and provisions, threw away

Sir C. M'Carthy's defeat.

their loads and deserted, or "were incapacitated from following by famine and fatigue." At last, after a toilsome march, M'Carthy arrived on the banks of the Adoomansoo. On the afternoon of the 24th of January the Ashantees appeared on the opposite bank of the river. They made repeated attempts to cross the river, but were always driven back with loss. After two hours' fighting the British troops required further supplies of ammunition. The storekeeper had only one small bag of ball and one small keg of powder on the field. The Ashantees, observing that the British fire slackened, made a second attempt to cross the river. At the same time, with more than the usual skill of savages, they made a flank movement to threaten M'Carthy's retreat. The British force, irretrievably defeated, fell into confusion. M'Carthy himself was wounded, and subsequently beheaded with the other officers who had carried him out of the action. The Ashantees remained the masters of the field. In the following summer they overran the whole Fantee territory, and encamped before Cape Coast Castle itself.

The British arms had suffered an annoying defeat from a savage opponent. Every one endeavoured to lay the blame of the disaster on his neighbour. The troops declared, with some reason, that the reverse was due to the neglect of the storekeeper to provide them with ammunition. The storekeeper laid the blame on the Ordnance authorities at home. The first soldier of his age, Wellington himself, did not escape from all censure. It was said that he had neglected to provide the Gold Coast with sufficient stores. He was overruled in his sensible protest that valuable ordnance and stores should not be sent without proper persons to take charge of them. His advice was disregarded, but his counsel was amply justified by the result. Fresh ordnance and stores were shipped for the Gold Coast, but no one knew how to land them on their arrival. A raft was constructed for the purpose, but was upset in the heavy breakers which perpetually beat upon the coast of Africa, and that part of the valuable stores which had been placed on it sank beneath

Improvident measures of the authorities at home.

the waves. The local authorities, discouraged by the loss, abstained from any further attempts at landing the stores. The transport which had been sent specially to the Gold Coast was allowed to sail away; and the stores which Wellington had objected to sending to Africa were eventually landed in Barbadoes. The mismanagement, which was responsible both for the war itself and for M'Carthy's defeat, was emphasised anew by the circumstance.[1]

The peace of the Gold Coast was not disturbed during 1825; but the king of Ashantee, encouraged by the decisive success which the arms of his race had achieved, silently collected an army for the purpose of completing the conquests he had already made. The native princes, alarmed at these preparations, applied to Colonel Purdon, the new Governor of the Gold Coast, for aid. Purdon, after making them promise that they would not run away, engaged to help them. The whole regular force at his disposal consisted of 80 men of the Royal African Corps; but he had also about 500 militia and 10,000 native allies. With this force Purdon took the field in July 1826. On the 7th of August he met the Ashantees on an extensive plain about twenty-four miles from Accra. The Ashantee army was 25,000 strong. The British force was immediately weakened by the desertion of its entire right wing. But the small body of regular troops and militia in the centre was not disheartened by the misconduct of these faint-hearted auxiliaries. They opened at once a destructive fire of grape and canister on the Ashantees, who were dismayed at the effects of weapons with which they had formed no previous acquaintance. Seeing them waver, Purdon moved on them before they had time to rally. A native tribe, obeying his orders with accuracy, fell on their left flank at the same moment. Attacked in front and flank, the Ashantees were decisively defeated. Some five thousand of them were killed and wounded, the whole of their camp

The Ashantees defeated.

[1] For these events see *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, pp. 223, 224; and the Duke of Wellington's excellent comments in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 284, 304.

equipage was taken, and M'Carthy's skull was recovered by the victors. In a limited way Purdon's victory proved as decisive as Waterloo. Waterloo saved Great Britain for nearly forty years from a European war; Purdon gave his countrymen more than forty years of peace on the Coast of Guinea.

The little war which thus occurred did not attract much attention at the time. No notice was taken of it during the short autumnal session of 1826, and Parliament adjourned on the 13th of December without devoting half an hour of its time to the affairs of the Gold Coast. Before it was again assembled an event occurred which was of more immediate interest than the affairs of Ashantee. The Duke of York died on the 5th of January 1827; and the Duke's death had an effect on the politics of his age which the loss of even more prominent men would hardly have made. The Duke was heir presumptive to the throne. The possibility of his early accession give him influence in politics. He threw the whole of his influence into the cause of the extreme Tory section of the Cabinet. His death, therefore, was a fatal blow to the old-fashioned Tories.

The death of the Duke of York.

The death of the Duke of York left the command of the army vacant; it made his brother, the Duke of Clarence, heir-presumptive to the throne. There was only one Englishman who was evidently competent to succeed to the Duke's office. No one could pretend to compete for a military post with Wellington. The chief command of the British army had, however, for many years been confided to a prince of the blood, and the royal family clung to a post to which its members conceived that they had an almost hereditary claim. The king actually suggested that he should himself command his own army, and spoke to the officers about him on the subject. The "preposterous" idea, as Liverpool called it, was at once rejected by the ministry, and Wellington was formally appointed commander-in-chief.[1]

The command of the army.

One of the questions raised by the Duke of York's decease was thus easily disposed of. The other occasioned more

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. pp. 531–537.

dispute. The Duke of Clarence had become heir-presumptive to the throne, and desired, in consequence, to be placed in the position which the Duke of York had filled. The Duke and Duchess of York had received an income of £37,000 a year. The Duke and Duchess of Clarence had an income of only £26,500. The death of the Duke of York had, however, the effect of increasing the income of each of his younger brothers by £3000 a year, and had therefore raised the income of the Duke and Duchess of Clarence to £29,500. The ministers proposed to grant the Duke an additional £3000 and the Duchess an additional £6000 a year, thus raising their joint incomes to £38,500. The proposal excited strong opposition both in the House and in the country. It was argued that an income of £30,000 a year was amply adequate to enable the Duke to support his position; that his elder brother's death did not necessitate any alteration in his establishment; and that the condition of the country made it especially undesirable to increase the allowances of the royal family. These arguments were urged in various debates, and enforced by repeated divisions. The minority, however, which resisted the proposal gradually dwindled. The original resolution was carried by 167 votes to 65; the report was agreed to by 173 votes to 57. The second reading of the bill was passed by 128 votes to 39; the House decided to go into committee by 99 votes to 15; and the Opposition did not venture on a division on the third reading. The heir-presumptive, therefore, obtained his additional income; but people thought that it was dearly purchased by the unpopularity which it brought and the publicity of the discussions which it provoked. The royal family could hardly afford to be perpetually applying to Parliament for increased allowances. It was unfortunate for them that their applications were usually made in years of distress.[1]

Increased allowance to the Duke of Clarence.

[1] The six younger sons of George III. had originally £60,000 settled on them, with benefit of survivorship. The five survivors, therefore, received an additional £2000 each on the death of the Duke of Kent. The four survivors became entitled to an additional £3000 each on the death of the Duke of York. An additional £6000 was granted to each prince in 1806, and an additional

Long before the grant to the Duke of Clarence was agreed to, the Duke of York was buried at Windsor. The funeral was not a military one; it was, in fact, impossible to have a military funeral, as there were not troops enough in England to bury a field-marshal.[1] But it was largely attended. Liverpool was, indeed, fortunately for himself, absent at Bath. But the ministry was otherwise well represented. Wellington was one of the pall-bearers; Melville, the First Lord of the Admiralty, was one of the eight peers who assisted the chief mourner; and Huskisson, Wynn, Canning, Peel, Westmorland, and Eldon represented the Cabinet. The evening was bitterly cold; St. George's Chapel intensely damp; and many of those who attended the ceremony had cause for recollecting it. Pelham, Bishop of Lincoln, caught so bad a cold that he was dead in three weeks; Wellington, who was in delicate health, was made seriously unwell; and Canning, whose constitution had been shattered by repeated attacks of gout, was seized with a dangerous illness.[2] When Parliament met, on the 8th of February, he was at Brighton, too unwell either to write or to read his own letters, or to hold any long conversation on public business.[3] The health of the Prime Minister was not more satisfactory than that of the Foreign Secretary.

The Duke of York's funeral.

Liverpool, at the commencement of 1827, had been for twenty years continuously in office. Worn by incessant labour, his health during the last two years had been visibly giving way. He was so broken after

Illness of Lord Liverpool.

£6000 to the Duke of Clarence and the Duke of Kent on their marriage. The Duke of Clarence, it will be recollected, refused his £6000 on that occasion; but he took it three years afterwards, with its arrears. (*Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. p. 1125.) He had also an extra £2500 a year granted to him on the ground that his profession, the navy, brought him smaller remuneration than his brother's profession, the army. See *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvi. pp. 540, 565, 820, 1247, 1342, for the debates. The minority against the proposal was by no means composed of Radicals. Lord Althorp, Lord Howick, Lord Morpeth, and Lord Tavistock all voted against it.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 537.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1827, Chron., p. 228; Greville, vol. i. p. 89. See, for allusions to the previous health of Canning, Buckingham's *George IV.*, pp. 218, 243.

[3] See Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. pp. 583, 587.

the session of 1824 that political gossips confidently anticipated his retirement; he was so much annoyed at the course of events in 1825 that he contemplated resigning. He staked his existence as a minister in 1826 on a minute point of policy to which his whole party objected.[1] The differences in the Cabinet in the autumn of that year increased his anxiety. Half of his colleagues objected to Huskisson's policy on the corn law question; and the difference was so marked and so serious that Liverpool doubted in December whether the ministry would be able to meet Parliament in the following February.[2] Oppressed by these anxieties, Liverpool went to Bath to recruit his failing health. He recovered sufficiently to be able to return to town in February: he was in his place in the House of Lords when Parliament met. He spoke nine days afterwards (on the 17th of February), on the Duke of Clarence's grant. "His friends remarked upon the unusual inefficiency in his manner in opening this proposition."[3] Yet they none of them seem to have anticipated the coming catastrophe. The morning afterwards Liverpool retired as usual, after breakfast, to his library. His servant, going into the room soon afterwards, found him lying insensible on the floor. He had been seized with a mixed fit of apoplexy and paralysis; and he never recovered sufficient consciousness to enable him to resign his office. In this miserable condition he lingered on for two years, when death relieved him from further suffering.

Lord Liverpool's seizure marks an important epoch in the history of the present century. Liverpool himself filled an important position in the councils of his sovereign. Perhaps no Englishman ever held more influential offices, or occupied them during a more critical period or for a longer time. Foreign Minister, Home Secretary, Colonial Minister charged with the conduct of the war, Prime Minister in turn, Liverpool had the opportunity of making a great impression on the

[1] Duke of Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. pp. 85, 98, 103. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 435.

[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 441.

[3] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 463.

policy of his age. During his tenure of the Foreign Office the Peace of Amiens was signed; during his tenure of the Colonial Office marked success first smiled on the British arms in the Peninsula. While he was Prime Minister the battle of Waterloo was fought, a durable peace was concluded, and the country at home passed through alternate phases of adversity and prosperity. The earlier years of his Administration were memorable for the severe policy which culminated in the Six Acts; the later years of his Administration were remarkable for the liberal measures which have been recorded in this chapter. But Liverpool was not the originator of either policy. During the first ten years of his ministry, Castlereagh was the guiding spirit who inspired its measures. During the last four years of his ministry, Canning was, to all intents and purposes, Prime Minister. During the whole period Liverpool kept order among his colleagues, composed their quarrels, and oiled the wheels to make it possible for the machinery of Government to work. With great knowledge of finance, he never attempted to guide the financial policy of his Government. He probably despised Vansittart's measures, but he supported them. He certainly approved Robinson's proceedings, and he supported them. He supported Sidmouth in his defence of the criminal code; he supported Peel in his reform of it. He supported Castlereagh in maintaining the Holy Alliance; he supported Canning in resisting it. With great tact, with considerable judgment, with much ability, he had not the power of impressing a personal character on his ministry. In one sense he had his reward: he was enabled to remain in office for an unprecedented period, and to combine the most unpromising materials in an ostensible union. Men who would have refused to work under any one else consented to work under him. But the discordant elements of his ministry were scattered when he was struck down; and men recollected that, with all his tact and all his conciliatory manners, the Prime Minister had lived and died without a policy.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

During the unhappy period of his residence in India Mackintosh was in the habit of occasionally visiting places beyond the boundaries of his own jurisdiction. On one of these excursions he went to the Portuguese settlement of Goa, and he recorded, in a remarkable sentence in his diary, the impression which the visit made upon him. "No mosque, pagoda, or public rite of the native religions," he wrote, "was or is allowed at Goa. No native of the least rank or character could live here. Even the engineers are forbidden to employ any but Christian labourers, as the king of Great Britain would have been forbidden to have employed Nelson if he had been a Catholic. The effect of this wise system is visible. In Goa are neither merchants, nor bankers, nor commercial correspondence with the rest of India. No bill can here be cashed." "Among the concessions made to religious liberty in England during the reign of William and Mary," wrote another great man, "there were none in favour of the Roman Catholics. On the contrary, new laws were passed, of excessive severity, tending to render the Roman Catholics poor and ignorant, heaping penalty upon penalty, and making them, as it were, slaves among a nation of freemen. The reigns of Elizabeth, of James I., of Charles I., of Charles II., and of James II. had been disturbed by Roman Catholic plots, more or less sanguinary, some using as their means the assassination of the sovereign, others the introduction of a foreign army, but all tending to extinguish the liberties and destroy the independence of England. Whether the precautions adopted by the English Parliament were wise I

Religious intolerance.

will not decide; but I am clearly of opinion they were just."[1] The opinion which has been quoted of one of the greatest constitutional statesmen modifies the inference which might otherwise be unjustly drawn from Mackintosh's sarcasm. A system which Lord Russell, in the earlier years of his memorable career, deliberately declared to have been just, deserves, at any rate, careful study from any one who ventures to impugn its injustice. The penal laws, whose severity Lord Russell admits to have been excessive, were perhaps the natural consequence of the great religious revolution of the sixteenth century. The nation previously had almost universally professed the faith of the Church of Rome. The Pope, indeed, had never possessed in this country the authority and power which he claimed in other lands. But every Englishman was necessarily a Roman Catholic, because Roman Catholicism was practically the only Christian religion known in England. The Reformation, in the eyes of its promoters, did not alter this condition. It was the object of the first Reformers to remove the abuses which had crept into the Church: they had originally no intention of breaking up Christianity into hostile sections. Great changes, however, either in religion or politics, are not likely to produce unanimity of opinion. When the old landmarks are broken down, some persons will venture farther than others into the unknown region beyond. When the authority of Rome was once disowned, various opinions were certain to arise on the nature of the religion which was to be substituted for the old faith. A few persons, clinging to the church in which they had been born, preferred to adhere to the forms to which they had been accustomed. The mass of the nation, with Henry at their head, desired to free themselves from the interference of the Pope, but to preserve the ritual of the Romish Church; while more advanced thinkers thought that the ancient ritual should be swept away, and that all the forms of Popery should be banished from the country.

Circumstances under which the penal laws were passed.

These various opinions resulted in a compromise. An en-

[1] Mackintosh, vol. ii. p. 148. Russell on English Government, p. 144.

deavour was made to concede something to all parties. The nature of these concessions has been admirably told by Macaulay. The liturgy of the Romish Church was retained, but it was translated into English; the rich vestments in which the priests of Rome had officiated were discarded, but the clergy were allowed a white surplice. Ordination and confirmation were enjoined, but they were no longer regarded as sacraments. The symbols of superstition were abolished from the churches, but the sign of the Cross was retained in baptism. The doctrine of transubstantiation was rejected, but the people were ordered to receive the sacrament on their knees. These arrangements formed a compromise, intended to unite the whole nation in one Church. Uniformity in religion was regarded as indispensable. The faith of Cranmer was very different from that of Elizabeth; the religion of Elizabeth differed widely from that of Charles II. But Cranmer, Elizabeth, and Charles II. were all agreed in enforcing uniformity. Cranmer was prepared to put down resistance at all hazards. Elizabeth insisted on punishing "recusancy" with fines. Charles II. directed that the Prayer-book, and the Prayer-book alone, should be used in public worship.

The compromise of the Reformation.

The desire for uniformity,

The attempt to establish uniformity by Act of Parliament ended, of course, in a miserable failure. "Religion," said one of the most learned men of the day, "is like the fashion. One man wears his doublet slashed, another laced, another plain; but every man has a doublet. So every man has his religion. We differ about trimming. Men say they are of the same religion for quietness' sake; but, if the matter were examined, you would scarce find three anywhere of the same religion in all points."[1] Selden's quaint language exactly expressed the religious views of his age. The people were agreed in professing Christianity, but they differed about the trimmings. The Roman Catholics naturally thought that the Reformation had gone too far. The extreme Protestants were angry because it had not gone far enough. One party was

[1] Selden's *Table Talk*, "Religion."

shocked at the suppression of the mass, the other party was horrified at being told to kneel at the sacrament. The Roman Catholics refused to abandon their own opinions at the dictation of the State, and were cut down for "recusancy." The extreme Protestants declined to read a Liturgy which they considered superstitious, and were fined for nonconformity.

which led to persecution and resistance,

Persecution naturally led to plot and counterplot. A Papist regarded as a rebel was almost forced to rebel against the Government. A Nonconformist, who was fined if he did not receive the sacrament, was compelled to choose between obedience and resistance. The passion for uniformity converted the extreme men on both sides into open enemies of the Government, and the Government had no choice but to alter its policy or to treat all nonconformity as criminal.

During the last years of the sixteenth and the earlier years of the seventeenth century, the Nonconformists, or the Puri-

with the assent, in the first instance, of the Nonconformists,

tans, as they began to be called, were assenting parties to this policy. Much as they disliked the Liturgy of the Church of England, the tenets of the Church of Rome were still more obnoxious to them; and it so happened that Roman Catholicism was the great danger with which England was threatened. Spain was the mightiest power of the world. The monarch of Spain was a merciless bigot, whose sole aim and object was to extend his own influence and the authority of the Pope. Every Englishman had heard of the horrible treatment to which Philip II. was exposing the Netherlands. The mighty Armada, which was being collected in the ports of Spain, was threatening the shores of England with similar desolation. The cause of the Church of Rome appeared the cause of the enemies of England; and every law intended to reduce the authority of Rome was assumed to be patriotic and wise. The end at which the nation was aiming was apparently accomplished with the defeat of the Armada. The cause of the Reformation seemed at last safe. But the cause of the Reformation was threatened with a new danger at the moment

of its seeming victory. Elizabeth was a warm opponent of the designs of Rome, but she had no particular affection for the principles which three-fourths of her subjects were professing. Her successor based his policy on the divine right of kings and the divine right of bishops. Elizabeth's dislike for the coldness of Puritanical worship induced her to establish the Ecclesiastical Commission. James roundly told the Puritans that he would make them conform or harry them out of the land. The pretensions which James raised and the policy which he pursued were renewed by his weak and misjudging successor. The Puritans, in consequence, were forced into violent opposition to the Court, and, when civil war broke out, became its most formidable adversaries. In England both Houses of Parliament swore to defend the Protestant religion. In Scotland "a covenant with God to continue in the profession of the Reformed religion" was signed with rapture. The whole strength of the Reformers was thus ranged against the Crown; and the Crown was compelled to rely for its support on the Roman Catholics, the High Churchmen, and the Churchmen who preferred their interests to their conscience.

who, ultimately, range themselves against the throne.

If Charles I. had succeeded in his memorable struggle, the Star Chamber would have been in all probability restored, religious liberty ruthlessly suppressed, and England would possibly have been neither Protestant nor free. He failed, and the victory of the Puritanical party restored the cause of the Reformation. But the Puritans were no more tolerant than the Catholics or the Churchmen. They made use of their victory to propagate their own tenets. Conforming clergymen were turned out of their cures; Episcopacy was suppressed; and Nonconformists appointed to every benefice that became vacant. Nor were the Puritans satisfied with depriving their opponents of office; they desired to engraft their own views and their own asceticism on the nation. Merry England was to be merry England no longer; the sports in which successive generations had indulged were condemned as unlawful,

The victory of the Puritans,

and its consequences.

and Churchmen were enjoined to turn Christmas, the happiest season of the year, into a period of penance and fasting. For a few years the Puritans succeeded in stamping their own character on the nation; but their success was achieved at a cost which their descendants are even now experiencing.

The reaction.

The Restoration came; and, with the return of the Stuarts, the nation threw off the bondage which religious asceticism had imposed on it. The enforced propriety which all classes had been compelled to observe was succeeded by unrestricted license. The Puritans had closed the playhouses when Shakespeare was popular; the Restoration reopened them to laugh at the coarse dramas of Wycherley. The Puritans had turned Christmas into a fast; the wits of the Restoration scoffed at fast and festival. The alteration in the tone of society was naturally reflected in the composition of the House of Commons. Under the Commonwealth the Puritans had enjoyed an indisputable authority in the senate; under the Restoration they found themselves in a hopeless minority. The extremity to which the Puritans had pushed their views had intensified the reaction against them.

The Puritans had no right to expect much mercy from the Parliament of Charles II. They had themselves set the example of persecution, and they could hardly complain at the adoption by their opponents of a precedent of their own making. Episcopacy was restored. An Act of Uniformity was passed, and rigorously enforced. Hundreds, even thousands, of clergymen were turned out of their livings for nonconformity. Parliament, however, did not stop at this point. The strength of the Puritan party was supposed to lie in the towns. The House of Commons decided on regulating the corporations. Every member of a corporation was required to receive the sacrament according to the rites of the English Church, and to sign a declaration renouncing the principles on which the Nonconformists had steadily acted. Charles endeavoured to mitigate the intolerance of his Parliament. He had little affection for the Nonconformists, but he had great sympathy with the

The measures of the Restoration.

The corporations.

Roman Catholics, and he saw that the provisions of the Corporation Act would apply to Rome as well as to Dissent. But Charles was powerless to restrain the violence of his Parliament. The Corporation Act became law; and the intolerance of the majority did not cease with this success. In 1664 a trumpery rising in the North of England was made the excuse for fresh measures of repression. A law was passed, known in history as the Conventicle Act, by which all private meetings for religious exercises including more than five persons besides the members of the family were made illegal. It was found that some of the ejected clergy still continued to reside in the neighbourhood of their former ministrations. In 1665 the Five Mile Act made it illegal for any nonconforming minister to come within five miles of any city, corporate town, or Parliamentary borough where he had been in the habit of ministering.[1]

The Conventicle Act and Five Mile Act.

These rigorous laws, passed in the first five years after the Restoration, were mainly directed against the Nonconformists. Their originators undoubtedly expected that they would make nonconformity impossible. Their ultimate effect was very different. Dissent might possibly have died out from the universal unpopularity which the Puritans had incurred. It struck a new and deeper root under the persecution with which they were assailed. Before a dozen years were over Parliament found itself face to face with a greater danger than nonconformity. Charles had never liked the intolerant legislation which had found favour with his Parliament. He was sincerely anxious to relieve the Roman Catholics from the operation of the Act of Uniformity, and he could not do so without concurrently removing the disabilities of the Dissenters. The Crown claimed, or, which was the same thing, Charles claimed, what was usually known as the dispensing power, or the right of suspending the penal laws in force. In 1672 Charles ventured to exercise this power. The moment which the king chose for the pur-

The dispensing power.

1 The Five Mile Act and the Conventicle Act were both repealed in 1812. 52 Geo. III. c. 155.—*Ann. Reg.*, 1812, Hist., p. 121.

pose was an unlucky one. A few days afterwards war broke out with Holland; the Exchequer became bankrupt; and Charles was compelled to meet his Parliament for the purpose of asking for a supply. He obtained the money which he wanted, but he gave the House of Commons an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion on the arbitrary nature of the prerogative which he claimed. The Commons objected to the use of the dispensing power; they objected to it still more because they fancied that it had been exercised in the interest of the Roman Catholics. They replied to Charles's claim by passing the Test Act. All persons holding either civil or military offices were obliged to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, to receive the Sacrament, and to renounce the doctrine of transubstantiation. The famous Act was passed without any opposition worthy of the name. The Nonconformists themselves, alarmed at the bearing of the Court towards Rome, sacrificed their own immediate interests and joined the Churchmen in supporting it.

The Test Act.

The Corporation Act had been mainly directed against nonconformity; the Test Act was chiefly aimed at the Roman Catholics; but, just as the Roman Catholics had been affected by the Corporation Act, so the Dissenters were affected by the Test Act. For fifteen years they suffered from the disabilities which were thus imposed on them. But, with the Revolution of 1688, a new era of legislation commenced. A Popish king had been driven out of the kingdom; a Protestant king had been established on the throne. Every Protestant was necessarily in favour of William; but no Roman Catholic could be enthusiastic for a revolution which permanently excluded princes of his own faith from the succession. The Dissenters were rewarded for their support by the promise of toleration; and one of the first Acts of the Convention Parliament gave them the religious relief which they desired. A Toleration Act was passed, which Macaulay has mentioned as a remarkable instance of the manner in which legislation is framed in this country. The laws of which the Dissenters complained were not repealed; they were not even repealed

The Toleration Act.

so far as Nonconformists were concerned. But every one who took a new oath of fidelity to the Crown, who abjured the damnable doctrine that princes excommunicated by the Pope might be murdered by their subjects, and who signed a declaration of faith in the Holy Trinity and in the inspiration of Holy Scripture, was relieved from the operation of statutes which disabled him from worshipping God according to his own conscience. The Quaker, who conscientiously objected to take an oath, was permitted to make a declaration to the same effect. The Act practically relieved the Nonconformists from those disabilities imposed upon them by the Restoration which interfered with the exercise of their religion. The law, indeed, still remained; but the law, so far as the exercise of their religion was concerned, was made inoperative.

Such were the concessions which were made to religious liberty, but no concessions were made to the Roman Catholics. An Act of Charles II. had already made it impossible for a Papist to sit in Parliament. An Act of William III. deprived the Papists of the elective franchise. Still more rigorous legislation was, however, in store for them. An Act, designed to prevent the further growth of Popery, inflicted the punishment of imprisonment for life on any Popish priest who had the temerity to perform the services of his Church; it disabled the Papist from purchasing real property and from inheriting real estate.[1] It seemed hardly possible for the ingenuity of man to devise a harsher method for suppressing an objectionable religion; yet the laws which applied to the Roman Catholics in Great

[1] The history of the legislation which has thus been summarised will be found in the Statute Book. The Corporation Act is the 13th Charles II., c. 1. The Uniformity Act, 14th Charles II., c. 4. The Conventicle Act, 16th Charles II., c. 4. The Five Mile Act, 17th Charles II., c. 21. The Test Act, 25th Charles II., c. 2. The Act which prevented Papists sitting in Parliament was the 30th Charles II., c. 2. The Act which deprived them of the franchise was the 7th and 8th William III., c. 27. The Act which imposed on them civil disabilities was the 11th and 12th William III., c. 4. Macaulay has described the great religious struggle of the seventeenth century so admirably, that I almost hesitated to set down the few preceding observations, without which, however, the history of 1828–29 would be unintelligible. See also Green's *Short History of the English People*, and Lord John Russell's speech in 1828, in moving the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.

Britain were mild in comparison with the penal code enforced against them in Ireland. The Irish Roman Catholics would have willingly exchanged places with their co-religionists in Great Britain.

The penal laws in Ireland.

The treatment which was applied to Ireland for centuries is the subject of the darkest chapter in the history of England. It accounts for, if it does not justify, the hatred with which the Saxon in that country is still regarded by the Celt, and explains the long series of obscure rebellions in Ireland against the English Government. The treatment of the Rayahs by the Turks, of the Poles by the Russians, of the Dutch by the Spaniards has been constantly reprobated by successive generations of Englishmen; yet Ireland has experienced from her English rulers some of the evils which were inflicted on the Netherlands, on Poland, and on Greece. The sufferings of the Irish people partly arose from the imperfect hold which the kings of England possessed over the country. Nominally lords of Ireland, receiving the occasional submission of the chieftains of the wild Irish septs, who maintained themselves in barbarous independence in the north and west of the island, the kings of England had really no authority beyond the few counties which were included in the Pale.

The condition of Ireland before the sixteenth century.

From the days of Henry II. to the days of the Tudors this state of things continued. A small portion of Leinster and Munster, included within the Pale, was governed by English laws and English customs; while the Irish beyond the Pale acknowledged no authority except the Brehon or Irish Law. Sir Edward Poynings, indeed, by a famous statute, which still bears his name, extended all the laws of England to the whole of Ireland. But Poynings' laws were, in Sir John Davies' quaint language, "like good lessons set for a lute that is broken and out of tune." "The king's laws were not obeyed twenty miles in compass. Whereupon grew that byword used by the Irish, 'that they dwelt by west the law, which dwelt beyond the river of the Barrow,' which is within thirty miles of Dublin."[1]

[1] Sir John Davies' *Historical Tracts*, London, 1787, pp. 176, 177. Sir John

This state of things naturally led to constant trouble. There was continual border warfare between the English and the Irish. The Irish treasury was usually empty,[1] and to support the war the English captains were obliged to levy "coin livery and pay" upon the English settlers. The English settlers naturally gave up their freeholds when they found that they were not only exposed to the attacks of the Irish, but that they were also liable to be pillaged by their own governors. Some of them returned to England; others of them, becoming lawless from long residence in a lawless country, changed their names and habits, and placed themselves under the Brehon Law, becoming more Irish than the Irish themselves.

Ireland remained in this miserable condition from the days of the Plantagenets to the time of the Tudors. The great rebellion of Tyrone, in the reign of Elizabeth, led to the introduction of a new system. The rebellion had broken out in Ulster, which was at that time the most rude and uncivilised part of Ireland; and the Government, after its suppression, decided on making its recurrence impracticable. Many years before, the country of the O'Connors, bordering on the Pale, had been divided into shires, which had been called King's County and Queen's County, and colonised by English settlers. The same policy was pursued, to a much greater extent, in Ulster. Two-thirds of the north of Ireland were declared to have been forfeited by the rebellion; and much of this vast territory was allotted to settlers from England and Scotland. The material results which followed this act of robbery have helped to conceal its true nature. It seems ungenerous to abuse a policy which turned a wilderness into a garden, and which created new industries in places where industry had never been known. But the good result cannot justify the evil act; and the good result was, in itself, attended with many drawbacks. For thirty years the Irish

The colonisation of Ulster.

Davies' *Discovery of the True Causes why Ireland was never brought under Obedience of the Crown of England*, from which the quotation in the text is made, is an excellent short history of the English in Ireland antecedent to the period dealt with by Mr. Froude.

[1] "In thesauro nihil."—Ibid., p. 20.

sullenly acquiesced in a fate which they had no power to resist; but during the whole of this period they awaited their opportunity for revenge. The opportunity arrived. The differences between Charles I. and his Parliament weakened the reins of administration. The Irish rose against the English settlers. Their long-nurtured discontent broke out with pitiless violence. Scotch and English, men and women, old and young, were cut down in one cruel massacre; and all England shuddered at a story which had had no parallel in its history.[1]

The massacre of 1641.

The colonisation of Ulster had been effected in 1609; the massacre of the English occurred in 1641; the revenge was postponed for another eight years. During the interval the English had other work to do than to avenge the massacre of their unhappy kinsfolk. But the work which was done in England had provided them with a more effective army than any which the Irish had hitherto encountered. Cromwell and Ireton were men whose words were few, whose swords were sharp, and who had no pity for Irish Catholics. The pacification of Ireland by Cromwell was effected by an indiscriminate slaughter of the Irish. "The work of conquest" was continued by Ireton and Ludlow with the same fierce perseverance with which it had been commenced by Cromwell. Every Irishman found in arms was either slain or driven out of the country; and Irishmen were compelled to choose between forced labour in the West Indies and voluntary service in foreign armies. Cromwell's settlement of Ireland did not, however, stop at this point. His army was paid by debentures secured on the land of Ireland. The conclusion of the struggle involved their redemption; their redemption necessitated the forfeiture of the estate of every Irish landlord. The old proprietors were driven beyond the Shannon, and their property was parcelled out among Cromwell's soldiers. The colonisation of Ulster had created new industries in the North of Ireland. Cromwell's stout-hearted settlers improved

Cromwell's Irish policy.

[1] Mr. Lecky has thrown some doubt on the incidents of this massacre. *History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii. pp. 128–138.

the condition of Leinster and Munster. A strong government ensured peace and quiet, and peace and quiet had the effect of promoting trade and agriculture.

If succeeding Governments had persevered in Cromwell's system, the Irish question might have worn a different shape from that which it ultimately assumed. The restoration of the Stuarts, however, made Cromwell's system impracticable. Charles could hardly have consented to the permanent exclusion of thousands of Irish proprietors from their estates, whose chief fault was the support which they had given to his father and himself. After every debenture issued to Cromwell's troops had been redeemed by a grant of land, large tracts of country remained unsettled. The residue was restored, under the new Government, to the old proprietors, and the hardship of their fate was by this means to some extent alleviated. But Cromwell's settlement had left its mark on the ill-fated country. Before it the Irish had possessed two acres out of every three of cultivated land in Ireland. After the arrangements concluded under Charles II. their holding was reduced to one-third[1] of the soil which was worth holding. The "curse of Cromwell" had increased the bitterness of Celt against Saxon, of Catholic against Protestant. The policy of Charles II. had not obliterated the recollection of the wrong which the Irish had suffered; but it had restored to them the power of revenge of which Cromwell had deprived them. Rebellion might possibly have been expelled by Cromwell's drastic measures. Peace became impossible when Cromwell's purge was supplemented by Charles II.'s sedative.

His policy is modified after the Restoration.

The first period in the history of the English in Ireland embraces the long centuries of imperfect conquest and border warfare which commenced with the first of the Plantagenets and terminated with the last of the Tudors. The second period in the history of the English in Ireland commences with the reign of Elizabeth and terminates

The Revolution.

[1] Froude (*English in Ireland*, vol. i. p. 153); but cf. Green's *Short History*, p. 620, and Lecky's *History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii. p. 181.

with the Stuart dynasty. A third period in the history of Ireland commenced with the Revolution. James II. had pusillanimously deserted the throne which he had disgraced, and had not had the spirit to strike in England a single blow for himself or for his family. But he had reason to expect that the circumstances which made him unpopular in England would commend him to his Irish subjects. The Irish had always supported the cause of his dynasty; they professed the same religion as himself; they were too glad of a pretext for striking one more blow to deliver themselves from their conquerors. James landed in Ireland, and the Irish rose to welcome him. The ranks of his army were speedily filled; the Protestant supporters of William were unable to keep the field against the Irish; Derry was besieged and reduced to extremities; Schomberg saw his soldiers dying by hundreds inside their trenches at Dundalk; and James was apparently secure of an easy victory. His own cowardice and misconduct, the courage and sagacity of his great adversary, averted a catastrophe which might have changed the fate not only of Ireland, but the world. The passage of the Boyne was effected; James, in panic, fled from the country; and Dutch Ginkel, who had succeeded Dutch Schomberg, won the battle of Aghrim and commenced the siege of Limerick. The history of the penal laws which crushed the Irish Catholics for more than a century commenced with this memorable siege.

The siege of Limerick.

The city of Limerick was probably capable of making a stout resistance, which would have entailed considerable inconvenience on the besiegers, but would hardly have averted the ultimate fate of the city. It was, therefore, the interest of both parties to attempt to make terms. The Irish might fairly hope for consideration if they saved the English the expense and anxiety of a long siege; the English might honourably concede the most advantageous terms to a garrison which enabled them to complete their conquest. These considerations properly influenced the commanders of both armies. The Irish offered to surrender if certain terms were secured to them. Ginkel offered alternative conditions,

which were afterwards embodied in the famous Articles of Limerick. By the first of these articles it was agreed that "the Roman Catholics of this kingdom shall enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their religion as are consistent with the laws of Ireland, or as they did enjoy in the reign of Charles II.; and their Majesties, as soon as their affairs will permit them to summon a Parliament, will endeavour to procure the said Roman Catholics such further security in the exercise of their religion as may preserve them from the disturbance of the said religion." By the second article "all the inhabitants or residents of Limerick or any other garrison, all officers and soldiers now in arms under any commission of King James, in the several counties of Limerick, Clare, Cork, and Mayo, *and all such as are under their protection in the said counties*, shall hold possession of and enjoy all their estates of freehold and inheritance, and all the rights, titles, and interest which they or any of them held, enjoyed, or were rightfully entitled to in the reign of Charles II.; and all and every of the said persons, of what profession, trade, or calling soever they be, shall and may use, exercise, and practise their several respective professions, trades, and callings as freely as they did use, exercise, and enjoy the same in the reign of King Charles II." The Articles of Limerick.

Such was the substance of the two first articles of the Treaty of Limerick. In the draft which was subsequently submitted for the ratification of the Crown the important words which are italicised in the foregoing paragraph were accidentally omitted. The omission was discovered and rectified by letters patent. The letters patent rectifying the omission stated that the words "had been casually omitted by the writer;" that "the omission was not discovered till after the articles had been signed," but "was taken notice of before the town was surrendered;" that the Lords Justices promised that the omission should "be made good;" and that the Crown had therefore ordered the restoration of the omitted words to the article.[1]

[1] Mr. Green, in his excellent *Short History of the English People*, writes:

The Treaty of Limerick had confirmed the Irish Catholics in the privileges which they had enjoyed in the time of Charles II. It had held out to them a hope that further concessions would be granted to them. The disabilities under which the Irish Roman Catholics had lain in the time of Charles II. were as follows: (1) Every person entering orders or graduating at the University was to take the oath of supremacy; (2) every ecclesiastic and every person accepting office was to take the oath of supremacy; (3) every person admitted into a corporation was to take the oath of supremacy; (4) every person, without lawful excuse for absence, was to attend some place of worship of the Established Church, or to forfeit twelve

Disabilities of Irish Roman Catholics in the reign of Charles II.

"Both sides were, of course, well aware that such a treaty was merely waste paper, for Ginkel had no power to conclude it, nor had the Irish Lords Justices. The latter, indeed, only promised to do all they could to bring about its ratification by Parliament, and this ratification was never granted." This is not quite an accurate statement of the case. The Lords Justices and Ginkel undertook that "their Majesties will ratify these articles within the space of eight months or sooner, and use their utmost endeavours that the same shall be ratified and confirmed by Parliament." It is clear from this language that Ginkel and the Lords Justices had full power from the Crown to treat. It must be also equally clear that the ratification by Parliament was only necessary for those portions of the articles which pointed to a modification in the law. The ratification by the Crown made this plain. The Crown ratified and confirmed the same, and every clause, matter, and thing therein contained. "*And as to such parts thereof*, for which an Act of Parliament shall be found to be necessary, we shall recommend the same to be made good by Parliament." From the moment at which the Treaty of Limerick was signed, the Crown was pledged to secure to the Roman Catholics all the rights which they had enjoyed in the reign of Charles II. Mr. Froude, in his *English in Ireland*, has given an accurate account of this famous treaty; but he implies throughout that Parliament was justified in re-omitting the words, which the letters patent had restored, to the second article. Mr. Froude overlooks the facts (1) that Parliament omitted, not only these words, for the omission of which it had a shadow of justification, but the whole of the first article, for the omission of which it had no justification whatever; (2) that Parliament ought never to have had the opportunity of formally confirming the article, as the treaty was good without its confirmation. All that Parliament ought to have been invited to do was to give the Roman Catholics "such *further* security in the exercise of their religion" as the Crown had promised to use its utmost endeavours to obtain for them. See Green's *Short History*, p. 678; Froude's *English in Ireland*, vol. i. pp. 203–208; and cf. Parnell's *History of the Penal Laws in Ireland*, pp. 5–12. (See also Lecky, *Hist. of England*, vol. i. p. 279; and cf. Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 464.)

pence; (5) the Chancellor was at liberty to appoint a guardian to the child of a Roman Catholic; (6) a Roman Catholic schoolmaster was prohibited from teaching without a license from the ordinary and without taking the oath of supremacy.[1] It was not easy to justify these laws; but their continuance did not constitute any serious grievance. The Treaty of Limerick, however, had apparently foreshadowed their modification; and the Irish Roman Catholics awaited, therefore, with anxiety the meeting of an Irish Parliament. The Irish Parliament met in the autumn of 1692; it was dissolved in the autumn of 1693; but no proposal was made to it for the modification of the penal laws. The Parliament of Ireland was not again convened till the spring of 1695; and the king then, forgetting the Treaty of Limerick, told the members that "he was intent upon the great work of a firm settlement of Ireland upon the Protestant interest." The Parliament readily adopted the advice which the king offered. An Act of 1695 "deprived the Roman Catholics of the means of educating their children, either at home or abroad, and of the privilege of being guardians either of their own or of any other person's children." Another Act of the same year deprived the Roman Catholics of the right of bearing arms or of keeping any horse which was worth more than £5. An Act of 1697 ordered the expulsion of every Roman Catholic priest from Ireland. The Parliament which had imposed these disabilities on Irish Roman Catholics proceeded to confirm the Articles of Limerick, or "so much of them as may consist with the safety and welfare of your Majesty's subjects of this kingdom," and by a gross act of injustice omitted the whole of the first of these articles,[2] and the important paragraph in the second article which had been accidentally omitted from the original copy of the treaty, and subsequently restored to it by letters patent under the Great Seal. Reasonable men may differ on the propriety or im-

The penal laws of William III.

[1] Baldwin's *History of the Laws against Catholics*, p. 221.

[2] See Sir H. Parnell's *History of the Penal Laws*, pp. 13–16. The Acts referred to in the text were the 7th William III., c. 4; the 7th William III., c. 5; the 9th William III., c. 7; and the 9th William III., c. 2.

propriety of the conditions on which the surrender of Limerick was secured; but it is difficult to read the story of their repudiation without a deep sense of shame.

Three other Acts relating to the Roman Catholics were passed during the reign of William. An Act of 1697 forbade the intermarriage of Protestants and Papists. An Act of 1698 prevented Papists from being solicitors. Another Act of the same year stopped their employment as gamekeepers.[1] William died; and the breach of faith, which he had countenanced, was forgotten amidst the pressure of the legislation which disgraced the reign of his successor. Two Acts passed in this reign, for preventing the further growth of Popery, were styled by Burke the "ferocious Acts of Anne." By the first of these Acts a Papist, having a Protestant son, was debarred from selling, mortgaging, or devising any portion of his estate: however young the son might be, he was to be taken from his father's hands and confided to the care of a Protestant relation. The estate of a Papist, who had no Protestant heir, was to be divided equally among his sons. The Papist was declared incapable of purchasing real estate or of taking land on lease for more than thirty-one years. A Papist was declared incapable of inheriting real estate from a Protestant. He was disqualified from holding any office, civil or military. With twenty exceptions, a Papist was forbidden to reside in Limerick or Galway. Advowsons the property of Papists were vested in the Crown.[2]

The "ferocious Acts of Anne."

Religious intolerance had now apparently done its uttermost. When a Papist was deprived of every office; when he was forbidden to educate his own children; when he was debarred from purchasing real estate; when premiums were placed on the apostasy of his sons; when it was illegal for him to follow a profession, to act as a magistrate, to carry a gun, or to ride a horse fit for a gentleman to ride, zealous

[1] 9th William III., c. 3; 10th William III., c. 13; 10th William III., c. 8. Parnell, p. 20.

[2] Acts passed in the same session ordered the registry of all Popish clergy, and prevented Popish clergy coming into the kingdom. 2nd Anne, cc. 3, 6, and 7. See also 4th Anne, c. 2; 6th Anne, cc. 6, 16; and 8th Anne, c. 3.

Protestants might be pardoned for thinking that the power of Rome in Ireland was crushed out for ever. But the laws failed. Their severity ensured their failure. All the devices of which the law is capable were employed to defeat the object of the legislature; and the first of the ferocious Acts of Anne was almost openly disregarded. Its failure might have taught a less intolerant generation that they were aiming at an impossible and unjustifiable object. Its failure only induced the advisers of Anne to supplement it with harsher legislation. The Act of 1704 had deprived the Papist of the guardianship of his apostate child. An Act of 1709 empowered the Court of Chancery to oblige the Papist to discover his estate, and authorised the court to make an order for the maintenance of the apostate child out of the proceeds of it. The Act of 1704 had made it illegal for a Papist to take lands on lease; the Act of 1709 disabled him from receiving a life annuity. An Act of 1704 had compelled the registry of priests. The Act of 1709 forbade their officiating in any parish except that in which they were registered. These, however, were the least reprehensible features in the Act of 1709. Its worst features were the encouragement which it gave to the meaner vices of human nature. The wife of a Papist, if she became a Protestant, was to receive a jointure out of her husband's estate. A Popish priest abandoning his religion was to receive an annuity of £30 a year. Rewards were to be paid for "discovering" Popish prelates, priests, and schoolmasters. Two justices might compel any Papist to state on oath where and when he had heard mass, who had officiated at it, and who had been present at it. Encouragement was thus given to informers; bribes were thus held out to apostates; and Parliament trusted to the combined effects of bribery and intimidation to stamp out the last remnant of Popery.

The penal code, however, was not yet complete; the armoury of intolerance was not yet exhausted. An Act of George I. disabled Papists from serving in the Irish militia, but compelled them to find Protestant substitutes; to pay double towards the support of the

The penal laws of George I. and II.

militia, and rendered their horses liable to seizure for militia purposes.[1] By Acts of George II. the Papists were disfranchised; barristers or solicitors marrying Papists were deemed Papists; all marriages between Protestants and Papists were annulled; and Popish priests celebrating any illegal marriages were condemned to be hanged.[2] By an Act of George III. Papists refusing to deliver up or declare their arms were liable to be placed in the pillory or to be whipped, as the court should think proper.[3] Such were the laws which the intolerance of a minority imposed on the majority of their fellow-subjects. Utterly unjust, they had not even the bare merit of success. Witty Roman Catholics, like Mr. Myers, of Roscommon, became Protestants, pleading as "the grounds" of their conversion "2500 acres of the best grounds in the county of Roscommon." Protestants, with more honesty than their representatives in Parliament, became trustees for their Roman Catholic acquaintances, discharging their trust with a fidelity which won the admiration of their political opponents.[4] These, however, were isolated instances. "The great body of the people," wrote Arthur Young, "stripped of their all, were more enraged than converted: they adhered to the persuasion of their forefathers with the steadiest and the most determined zeal; while the priests, actuated by the spirit of a thousand inducements, made proselytes among the common Protestants in defiance of every danger. And the great glaring fact yet remains, and is even admitted by the warmest advocates of the laws of discovery, that the Established religion has not gained upon the Catholic in point of numbers; on the contrary, that the latter has been rather on the increase. I have conversed on the subject with some of the most distinguished characters of the kingdom, and I cannot after all but declare that the

[1] 2 Geo. I. c. 9.

[2] 1 Geo. II. c. 9; 7 Geo. II. c. 5; 19 Geo. II. c. 13; 23 Geo. II. c. 10.

[3] 15 and 16 Geo. III. c. 21. The foregoing statement does not exhaust the category of the penal laws. It instances only the most remarkable of them.

[4] See for both statements, Daunt's *Recollections of O'Connell*, vol. i. pp. 175–178.

scope, purport, and aim of the laws of discovery, as executed, are not against the Catholic religion, which increases under them, but against the industry and property of whoever professes that religion. In vain has it been said that consequence and power follow property, and that the attack is made in order to wound the doctrine through its property. If such was the intention, I reply, that seventy years' experience proves the folly and futility of it. Those laws have crushed all the industry and wrested most of the property from the Catholics; but the religion triumphs; it is thought to increase. The system pursued in Ireland has had no other tendency but that of driving out of the kingdom all the personal wealth of the Catholics, and prohibiting their industry within it. The face of the country, every object, in short, which presents itself to the eye of a traveller, tells him how effectually this has been done. I urge it not as an argument, the whole country speaks it as a fact."[1]

It is impossible to understand the history of 1828 and 1829 without an accurate knowledge of the penal laws. The best answer which it is possible to give to the few persons who still doubt the expediency of the emancipation of the Roman Catholics is the bare enumeration of the laws from which they were freed. The work of emancipation had, however, begun before the reign of George IV. In England the Dissenters were the first who were relieved from their grievances. The chapels had already been opened by the Toleration Act, but the Test Act still imposed a sacramental test on all placeholders. The law was commonly disregarded, and Dissenters were frequently admitted to office. In the reigns of George I. and George II. four Acts were passed protecting Dissenters who had violated the provisions of the Test Act. In 1747 the Dissenters were granted "a full and free pardon" for disobeying the law, and by their disobedience rendering essential service to the State. The principle of the Act of 1747 was continued till 1828. An indemnity Act was annually passed,

[1] Arthur Young, *Tour in Ireland*, Dublin, 1780, vol. ii. part ii. pp. 46, 49, 138.

by which "good men were forgiven for having done good service to their country." Parliament was less ready to grant relief to the Roman Catholic than to the Protestant. The generation which had carried the Act of 1747 passed away before the Roman Catholics of England were relieved from any of the disabilities which had been imposed on them after the Revolution.

First measures of relief.

Sir George Savile was one of the great men to whom Englishmen are indebted for the liberties which they now enjoy. His name is associated with the names of Dunning and Burke in the memorable stand made against the prerogative of the Crown during the earlier years of the reign of George III. He had the merit in 1778 of obtaining the repeal of the Act of William III., which made it illegal for a Popish priest to perform the services of his Church, or for a Roman Catholic layman to purchase or inherit real estate. This mild measure of relief produced a memorable result. A rumour that its operation would be extended to Scotland threw the country into a ferment. A fanatic young nobleman, exciting the passions of the mob, persuaded them to collect in thousands for the purpose of petitioning Parliament. A riot ensued, which the Government, the legislature, and the country had deep cause for remembering. Conflagrations were kindled in the metropolis; its streets ran red with blood; and scenes which were only paralleled during the Revolution in France were enacted in the heart of London. Military measures, too long delayed, were at last taken by the Government, and order was at length restored. But riot had done its work. Fifteen years elapsed before the partial measure of justice conceded to the Roman Catholics of England was extended to the Roman Catholics of Scotland.[1]

Before, then, the conclusion of the eighteenth century the Roman Catholics of Great Britain had been relieved of the disabilities affecting their property and the exercise of their

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1778, p. 189; 1780, pp. 254–287; 1793, pp. 147, 148. A suit was brought by a Protestant against a Roman Catholic in Scotland to deprive him of his estate under the penal laws.

religion. But the Act of William still prevented them from exercising the elective franchise; the Act of Charles II. made it impossible for them to sit in either House of Parliament. The Test Act debarred them from holding any office. In the meanwhile similar concessions had been made to the Irish Roman Catholics. But the privileges which had been conceded to them confer little credit on the English nation. The North American Colonies rebelled against the mother country. Every available regiment was hurried off to America; and the combined fleets of France and Spain rode unopposed in British waters, and insulted and terrified the coasts of this country. England, unable to spare troops to protect Ireland from invasion, was compelled to authorise the enrolment of Irish volunteers. A military force of a hundred thousand men, armed, accoutred and organised, convinced the rulers of Spain and France that a descent on Ireland was not only hazardous, but impracticable. But the force, which had thus been enrolled for the defence of Ireland, was used by Irish patriots for other objects. In 1779 Grattan carried a memorable resolution in the Irish House of Commons that "nothing but a free trade could save the country from ruin." In 1782 he followed up his previous victory by persuading the House of Commons to resolve that "no power on earth could make laws to bind Ireland except her own King, Lords, and Commons." The resolution of 1779 was carried to the Castle through streets lined with volunteers. The resolution of 1782 was only passed after a formal convention of the volunteers at Dungannon. England's need had been Ireland's opportunity: the greatest of her orators had used it to secure for his country a free trade and a free constitution.

The revolt of America and Grattan's resolutions.

Grattan's great victory had not been achieved in a moment. In the midst of its embarrassments the British ministry had endeavoured to conciliate the Roman Catholics of Ireland. A few months before the American rebellion broke out a proposal had been made to allow the Roman Catholics to take lands on lease for sixty-one years. The proposal was rejected; the rebellion occurred; and an

Other concessions to Irish Roman Catholics.

Act of 1778 was immediately passed authorising them to take lands on lease for 999 years. The disabilities, which prevented Papists from selling, or inheriting and devising real estate, were at the same time repealed; and the provisions which gave the apostate child of a Papist a maintenance out of his father's property were modified. Four years afterwards an Act of 1782 gave the Papists a right to purchase land, and repealed the laws which compelled the Papist to state on oath when and where he had heard mass celebrated; which forbade him from keeping a horse worth more than £5; which rendered his horse liable to seizure for militia service; and which prevented Papists from residing in Limerick and Galway. In the same year another Act was passed which enabled Roman Catholics, who were not ecclesiastics, to be guardians to children, and allowed them publicly and privately to act as tutors.[1]

The French Revolution.

The Parliament of Ireland was willing enough to relieve its Roman Catholic fellow-subjects from these disabilities, but it did not desire to do much more. The Protestants enjoyed every office in the State, and were opposed to legislation which would deprive them of their monopoly of place. The events which were taking place on the Continent were, however, striking a fatal blow at the monopoly of minorities. In 1792 the Government found itself compelled to support a bill by which Roman Catholics were admitted to the Bar, by which the laws prohibiting the mixed marriages of Protestants and Roman Catholics were repealed, and by which Roman Catholics were allowed to send their sons to be educated abroad. This measure of partial justice was followed a year afterwards by a much greater measure of relief. In the autumn of 1792 a great convention of Roman Catholic delegates, elected from every parish in Ireland, drew up a statement of their grievances. In presence of this convention the Government found it necessary to give way. An Act was passed in 1793 by which Irishmen "professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, or educating

Leads to further concessions,

[1] 17th and 18th George III., c. 49; 21st and 22nd George III., cc. 24, 62.

any of their children in that religion," were relieved from "any penalties, forfeitures, disabilities, or incapacities;" from "any laws for the limitation, charging, or discovering of their estates and property, or touching the acquiring of property, save such as his Majesty's subjects of the Protestant religion are liable and subject to." The same Act repealed the oaths required of electors, and enabled Roman Catholics to hold civil and military offices under the Crown. Certain exceptions were made to this wise and liberal measure. Roman Catholics were still precluded from sitting in either House of Parliament; they were still excluded from the highest offices in the judicature, in the administration, and in the army; and Roman Catholics having less than £100 a year in land, or having less than £1000 personalty, were precluded from wearing arms. But the Act of 1793 had swept away the most prominent disabilities of which the Roman Catholics had complained, and had placed them on a nominal equality with their Protestant fellow-subjects.[1]

The relief which had thus been afforded to the Roman Catholics of Ireland was, in fact, much greater than that which had been granted to the Roman Catholics of Great Britain. In Ireland the army was open to a Roman Catholic, and he could rise to any rank in the service below that of a general officer; in Great Britain every rank in the army was shut against the Roman Catholic. In Ireland a Roman Catholic could be made a justice of the peace; in Great Britain he was excluded from the magistracy. In Ireland every Roman Catholic, duly qualified, could take part in a Parliamentary election; in Great Britain votes were refused to Roman Catholics. The Irish Roman Catholic could serve on a corporation; the English Roman Catholic was precluded from doing so.[2] The

which were much greater than those made to Roman Catholics in Great Britain,

[1] The Act of 1792 was the 32nd George III., c. 21. The Act of 1793 was the 33rd George III., c. 21.

[2] It ought, for the sake of accuracy, to be observed that the relief of the Irish Roman Catholic was conditional on his taking certain oaths. But there was nothing in these oaths which Roman Catholics objected to take; so that the relief was in reality complete.

Irish Roman Catholic, therefore, enjoyed several privileges of which the English Roman Catholic was deprived. If an English Roman Catholic desired to enter the army, he had, in the first place, to cross St. George's Channel, and to obtain a commission on the Irish Establishment.[1] Ireland had no navy; and the British navy, therefore, had the singular advantage of being saved from the presence of even a solitary midshipman professing the Roman Catholic religion.

The distinction which was thus established in the treatment of Roman Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland would, in any circumstances, have been indefensible; but the difference became much more marked after the formal union of the two countries. Men like Eldon and Sidmouth believed that the admission of the Roman Catholics to the privileges which the Protestants enjoyed would be fatal to the existence of the Established Church; but neither Eldon nor Sidmouth could by any possibility prove that it was safe to make an Irish Roman Catholic, and unsafe to make an English Roman Catholic, a justice of the peace or an officer in the army. Relief, in short, had been either carried too far or had not gone far enough. The circumstances amidst which the Union had been effected made it, moreover, necessary to go further. It is not requisite in these pages to describe the method by which the Union was accomplished, or the means by which a small majority for the measure was gradually secured. Every available vote was of the last importance to Pitt's ministry; and the influence of the Roman Catholics, commanding as they did nearly every constituency, was of the greatest consequence to the Government. The Roman Catholics, however, naturally regarded the Union from their own standpoint. They were in favour of the Union if it would promote their own cause; they were opposed to it if it would perpetuate their exclusion from Parliament and from the highest offices in the State; and they sounded the Irish Government on the subject, and endeavoured to obtain

and consequently produced fresh difficulties after the Union,

which is supported by the Irish Roman Catholics on a promise of relief.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. pp. 651–1054.

some distinct pledge upon it. The Irish Government sent to London for instructions. It was directed to reply that "the opinion of the Cabinet was favourable to the principle of the measure; that some doubt was entertained as to the possibility of admitting Catholics into some of the higher offices; and that ministers anticipated considerable repugnance to the measure in many quarters, and particularly in the highest; but that, as far as the sentiments of the Cabinet were concerned, his Excellency need not hesitate in calling forth the Catholic support in whatever degree he found it practicable to obtain it." "In consequence of this communication, the Irish Government omitted no exertion to call forth the Catholics in favour of the Union. Their efforts were very generally successful." The Lord Lieutenant "was enabled to accomplish his purpose without giving the Catholics any direct assurance of being gratified, and throughout the contest earnestly avoided being driven to such an expedient, as he considered a gratuitous concession infinitely more consistent with the character of Government." But he never doubted that the concession would be made. The moment that the Union was carried he recalled the attention of his Majesty's ministers to the question, and impressed on them "the anxiety he felt that they should not suffer themselves to be anticipated in the purposed act of grace by the Opposition."[1] There can hardly, therefore, be a doubt that the Cabinet, the Lord Lieutenant, and the Irish Roman Catholics understood that the Union of the two countries would be followed by a complete measure of relief: it is hardly possible to doubt that the support of the Roman Catholics was secured on this understanding.

The circumstances which led to the defeat of Pitt's intention are well known. The king heard with sincere alarm the rumours of his minister's promises. He fancied that his dynasty was in some way or other dependent on the perpetual incapacity of his Roman Catholic subjects; he thought that his coronation oath formally pledged

Relief is refused by the king.

[1] These extracts are from Lord Castlereagh's letter to Pitt, dated 1st of January 1801. See Alison's *Castlereagh*, vol. i. pp. 130–131.

him to refuse any concessions. A solemn treaty, concluded with the Roman Catholics, had not prevented William III. from assenting to the numerous acts of oppression which distinguished his reign. Unfortunately a diseased mind made George III. cling to his oath with a tenacity which William III. would have laughed at. Pitt saw that it was impossible to convince the king; it was unluckily too plain that the sovereign's reason depended on the minister's forbearance, and Pitt gave way. His resignation paved the way for the succession of a purely Protestant ministry. It threw back the Roman Catholic question for a quarter of a century.

The position of the Roman Catholic question from 1801 to 1812.

During the eleven years which intervened between the resignation of Pitt and the commencement of the unrestricted Regency the position of the Roman Catholic question may be briefly stated. The king was supposed to be the chief obstacle to relief; and nearly every leading public man was under a silent pledge to refrain from raising the question during his Majesty's life. The only occasion on which a different course was pursued furnished a remarkable proof of the strength of the king's determination. By the Act of 1793 a Roman Catholic gentleman had been permitted to enter the army in Ireland; but a Roman Catholic could not receive an officer's commission in Great Britain. There was some doubt whether a Roman Catholic entering a regiment in Ireland could legally serve with his own regiment in Great Britain, and the Talents Administration decided on settling the matter by legislation. The king reluctantly gave his consent to a limited measure of this description. But the ministry either misunderstood the nature of the king's assent or thought that it might be possible to induce him to go a little further. The limited proposal which it had originally made was extended into a bill opening every rank in the army and in the navy to Roman Catholics, and allowing the Roman Catholics in these services the free exercise of their religion. The consequences of this extension ought to have been foreseen. For the first time since 1801 a ministry had violated the virtual understanding that the Roman

Catholic question should not be raised during the king's lifetime. The king, in serious alarm, threw himself into the hands of the Opposition. A new ministry, pledged to resist the Roman Catholic claims, was formed by the Duke of Portland. An appeal was made to the country on the cry of "No Popery;" and a strongly Protestant Parliament was returned by the constituencies. The Talents Administration had done more than the resignation of Pitt to postpone and defeat the claims of the Roman Catholics.[1]

With this single exception no serious steps were taken to relieve the Roman Catholics from their disabilities during the eleven years which elapsed from the resignation of Pitt to the commencement of the unrestricted Regency. Soon after the Union, indeed, Grattan became a member of the English Parliament. In 1804, and in many subsequent years, he brought the position of the Roman Catholics before the House of Commons. He exhibited on these occasions the eloquence and the ability which had distinguished him in the previous century in Dublin. But nothing came, and nothing was expected to come, of these debates. The button was on the foil; and Grattan knew as well as any member of the Cabinet that, while George III. lived, nothing would be done. Though, however, nothing was done, continual debates gradually altered the complexion of the question. During the earlier portion of the period the advocates of the Roman Catholics endeavoured to prove that relief might be granted on conditions which would protect the Established Church. During the latter portion of it the Roman Catholics rejected all conditions and insisted on unqualified concessions. "Every discussion," in the words of a frightened member of the Government, "was in reality mischievous. Something more dangerous appeared in each debate, and, in the last, the repeal of the Tests was boldly asked for all Dissenters in the United Kingdom, and all the Roman Catholics desire was demanded for the English Catholics."[2]

[1] The bill introduced in 1807 will be found in the *Ann. Reg.*, 1807, p. 421.

[2] Wellesley Pole, in *Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 249.

In the autumn of 1810 George III. became, for a second or third time, deranged in his mind. The ministry, hoping almost against hope for his recovery, made provisional arrangements for carrying on the government during his illness. His eldest son was invested with the Regency of the kingdom; but various restrictions were imposed upon him, which did not expire till the commencement of 1812. Their expiration naturally induced the Roman Catholics to hope that relief would at last be afforded them. The politicians who were supposed to enjoy the confidence of the Regent were known to be in favour of almost unlimited concessions, and it was naturally inferred that the Regent himself shared the views of his most intimate political friends. The Regent's views on the subject were, indeed, only of comparatively slight importance. Good men might hesitate to disregard the conscientious opinions of an old and virtuous king, but no one was likely to pay much attention to the religious scruples of a profligate prince. An excellent character had enabled George III. to exercise an almost boundless influence on every religious question; but the Regent's variable and unfortunate disposition deprived him of all influence on the subject. The time had once more arrived when the claims of the Roman Catholics were to be debated by statesmen, instead of being decided by the whims of a sovereign. At this precise moment the party in the Cabinet which was opposed to concession was deprived of its leader; and in reconstructing the Administration Liverpool was compelled to make the emancipation of the Roman Catholics an open question, and to entrust the lead of the House of Commons to Castlereagh, who was in favour of concession.

The Regency.

The alteration in the position of the question was soon manifest. Early in 1812, before the reconstruction of the Administration under Liverpool, a proposal to take the claims of the Roman Catholics into consideration was defeated by 174 votes to 102 in the House of Lords, and by 300 votes to 215 in the House of Commons.[1] Late in the same session,

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1812, Hist., p. 66.

after the reconstruction of the ministry, Canning proposed that the House should resolve early in the following session "to take into its most serious consideration the state of the laws affecting his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects in Great Britain and Ireland," and the motion was carried by the decisive majority of 235 to 106. A similar motion made in the House of Lords during the following week was only lost by 126 votes to 125, or by a majority of 1.[1] Seventeen years elapsed before the Roman Catholics obtained a more favourable division in the Upper House of Parliament.

Strictly speaking, the new Parliament assembled in 1812 was not pledged by the proceedings of its predecessors. But at the commencement of the session of 1813, Grattan moved that the House should resolve itself into a committee on the Roman Catholic claims. A long debate, protracted over four days, ensued, and Grattan's motion was ultimately carried by 264 votes to 224.[2] A motion in committee, that "it was highly advisable to provide for the removal of the civil and military disqualifications under which his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects now labour," was carried by 186 votes to 119;[3] and on the 30th of April Grattan introduced a bill to give effect to the resolution. The bill substituted a new oath for the oaths of allegiance, abjuration, and supremacy, and the declaration against transubstantiation and the invocation of saints. The new oath contained a promise of allegiance to the king and of support to the Protestant succession; a renunciation of the temporal jurisdiction of the Pope; a declaration of disbelief in the Pope's infallibility; a disavowal of any intention to disturb the Established Church. A Roman Catholic taking this oath was to be at liberty to sit and vote in either House of Parliament; to hold, with one or two exceptions, any civil or military office, and to be a member of any lay body corporate. Roman Catholic ecclesiastics were to be subject to further legislation. No person born out of the United Kingdom, or not residing

Grattan's action in 1813.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1812, Hist., p. 120. [2] Ibid., 1813, p. 28.
[3] Ibid., p. 30

within it, was to be eligible for any episcopal function; and every Roman Catholic clergyman was to take an oath that he would never consent to the appointment of any bishop "but such as he shall deem to be of unimpeachable loyalty and peaceable conduct;" and that he would have no correspondence or communication with the Pope or his tribunals except on ecclesiastical matters.

Such was the measure of relief introduced by Grattan in 1813. In its progress through the House of Commons Canning announced his intention of engrafting upon it certain amendments with the object of providing for the election of proper persons as bishops. Commissioners were to be appointed, both in Great Britain and Ireland, to whom the name of every person proposing to assume the functions of a bishop or dean was to be notified. The commissioners were to report on the nominations thus made to them; and the king or the Lord Lieutenant was to be at liberty, on their report, to allow or disallow the nomination. The amendments which were thus introduced created considerable consternation among the Roman Catholic hierarchy; but the House of Commons had no opportunity of pronouncing an opinion upon them. Almost immediately after their proposal the Speaker took the opportunity of the bill being in committee to move that the Roman Catholics should have every privilege except that of sitting and voting in Parliament. The Speaker's authority was so great that his amendment was carried by 251 votes to 247. A small majority of four had robbed the bill of its chief virtue, and its promoters declined to proceed with a measure which was no longer regarded as worth having.[1]

The Speaker carries a clause excluding the Catholics from Parliament.

For the second time in two consecutive years the Roman Catholics had been doomed to disappointment; and their disappointment was the greater, because their victory had seemed secure. The majority by which they had been defeated, however, was so small that they did not despair of reversing the decision of the House of Commons

The bill abandoned.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1813, Hist., p. 34. *Colchester*, vol. ii. p. 447.

in a future session. This result seemed so probable that the members of the Established Church were seriously alarmed. Societies were formed in London and the provinces to maintain the ascendancy of the Protestant religion; and petitions with this object were presented to Parliament from thousands of parishes. The alarm which the Protestants professed to feel would not, however, of itself have defeated the designs of Grattan. The worst enemies to the claims of the Roman Catholics at this juncture were the Roman Catholics themselves. The members of the Catholic Board in London, indeed, bitterly regretting that "hopes so nearly realised are still to be deferred," passed resolutions pledging themselves to continue their efforts to procure relief, and expressing their conviction "that the day is near at hand when every jealousy and every animosity on account of opinions purely religious will be buried in eternal oblivion." But the Catholic Board in Dublin, instead of imitating the wise example of their co-religionists in London, declared that the bill was imperfect and inadequate; and actually consented to discuss the propriety of requesting the Spanish Cortes to interfere.[1] The folly of the Catholic Board in Dublin was exceeded by the folly of the Roman Catholic prelates in Ireland. They thought the ecclesiastical clauses "incompatible with the discipline of the Roman Catholic Church," and they issued a pastoral letter declaring that they could not accede to the bill without incurring the guilt of schism, and that the ecclesiastical clauses "have not, and, in their present shape, never can have, our concurrence."[2] It was in vain that the authorities at Rome themselves interfered and endeavoured to persuade the Irish bishops to accept the measure. The least tolerant members of the Catholic Board repudiated the notion that "the slaves at Rome" were entitled to advise them. The more tolerant among them regretted the intemperate conduct of their colleagues; and differences, in consequence, arose among the representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, at the very moment at which

Agitation against their claims,

and proceedings of the Catholic Board,

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1813, pp. 100, 101. [2] Ibid., Chron., p. 349.

every Roman Catholic should have been ready to make any reasonable sacrifice for union.[1]

The effect of these differences was soon visible. In 1813 the Roman Catholics had been on the point of securing a victory. In 1814 no one was found to bring their claims before Parliament. In 1813 the House of Commons had resolved by 264 votes to 224 to take the claims of the Roman Catholics into consideration. The same House of Commons in 1815 rejected a similar motion by 228 votes to 147. In 1813 Grattan had been the unflinching advocate of the Roman Catholics; in 1815 he told them plainly that the failure of their cause was due to their own imprudence and indiscretion.[2] The divisions of the Catholic Board and the pretensions of the Roman Catholic prelates had robbed the Roman Catholics of their victory at the time at which their success was apparently secured.

which led to the rejection of the Roman Catholic claims.

The Parliament which was elected in 1818[3] had only a short existence; but a fresh attempt was made in the session of 1819 to secure consideration for the Roman Catholics. The occasion was memorable from the circumstance that it proved the last on which the great Irish orator was to plead the cause with which his memory is chiefly identified, and almost the last on which his voice was heard in the House of Commons. He obtained for a seconder Croker, the Secretary to the Admiralty; and Canning and Castlereagh, the two most prominent members of the Cabinet, were present to support him.

The Parliament of 1818.

The debate, however, which took place on Grattan's motion was not quite worthy of the occasion. It was generally expected that it would have been adjourned, and some of the most prominent members of the House accordingly reserved their

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1814, Hist., pp. 216, 217. [2] Ibid., 1815, Hist., p. 30.

[3] It ought perhaps to be added that there were great debates in 1817 on the subject in both Houses.—*Hansard*, vol. xxxvi. pp. 301–442, 600–678. In 1813 a bill (53 of George III., c. 128) was carried, enabling Irish Roman Catholics to hold in England all such offices as they were entitled to hold in Ireland. In 1817 "the Military and Naval Officers' Oaths Bill virtually opened all ranks in the army and navy to Roman Catholics and Dissenters."—57 Geo. III. c. 92.

speeches. But the House had rarely been so full. The great majority of the members desired to bring the discussion to a close, and at one o'clock in the morning the debate ended: 242 members voted with Grattan, 248 members against him. One of the tellers, however, remarked that some members had irregularly entered the House after the question had been put, and insisted that their votes should be disallowed. In this way the majority was reduced to 243, the minority to 241. The Roman Catholics had been defeated by two votes. The majority was small; but, small as it was, it was sufficient to influence the attitude of the Lords. The majority of the Peers was indisputably opposed to concession; but a good many of the Peers knew that it was hopeless to resist the decision of the House of Commons. In 1813, when Canning had carried his motion by a majority of 129, the Peers were almost equally divided—126 votes to 125. On that occasion 251 Peers had taken part in the division, either personally or by proxy: 253 Peers took part in the division in 1819; but the majority against the Roman Catholics increased to 41: 147 Peers voted against the motion, and only 106 in its favour.[1]

In a little more than a year after this division Grattan died. Determined to signalise the commencement of a new reign by a fresh debate on the same old subject, he set out from Ireland for London in the summer of 1820. His physicians in vain endeavoured to dissuade him from the journey. Twenty years before, when almost equally enfeebled by illness, he had made the same journey in the contrary direction to protest against the Union in the last Irish Parliament. On that memorable occasion, when too ill to stand, he had made some of the greatest of the many great speeches which distinguished his long career. But twenty years had lessened his capacity for performing work and enduring fatigue. "He travelled by slow and painful stages," and he reached London only to die. His death deprived the Roman Catholics of their warmest, their most persevering, their most eloquent advocate. If in Grattan's lifetime, and with the aid of Grattan's voice,

Death of Grattan.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xl. pp. 6-79, 386-448.

they had failed, they might well despair of success when their champion was gone.

Happily, however, great causes do not depend on the single lives of isolated politicians. The statesman who devotes his life to resisting the stream of popular progress may be certain that when he is gone the flood will flow on. The statesman who aims at directing the current may fail during his own lifetime, but may confidently anticipate that the force of the tide will ultimately win its way. The death of Castlereagh was followed by a revolution in the foreign policy of this country; the death of Ellenborough by the reform of the Criminal Code; the death of Liverpool by the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. Happier far has been the lot of the statesmen who resisted the measures of these men. The death of Romilly hardly delayed for a day the acceptance of his principles; the death of Canning was succeeded by the independence of Greece; the death of Grattan by the emancipation of the Roman Catholics.

Nothing, indeed, was done in 1820 to promote the Roman Catholic cause. Parliament, busily occupied with the conduct of a queen, had no leisure for considering the grievances of subjects. A year of the new reign passed without anything being done. But in the beginning of the session of 1821 the affair of the queen was finally settled, and Parliament was again able to attend to its ordinary business. On the 28th of February 1821, the claims of the Roman Catholics were brought before the House of Commons. The Roman Catholics had the good fortune to secure a champion whose eloquence was almost as brilliant as that of Grattan. William Conyngham Plunket, the son of a Presbyterian minister, was born on the 1st of July 1764. He was educated for the Bar, and succeeded in establishing the greatest forensic reputation which any Irishman has ever enjoyed. In 1807, after acting as Attorney-General for Ireland, he was returned to Parliament for Midhurst; and in 1812 he was selected to represent the University of Dublin. Short in stature, with an ungainly figure, he was one of the most brilliant speakers in an

William Plunket.

age of oratory. No member of the House of Commons had a more masterly grasp of his subject. No other orator could illustrate his meaning more happily, or win closer attention by the earnestness of his manner.[1] Plunket's ability naturally marked him out as Grattan's successor. But Plunket's political opinions made him also a peculiarly eligible champion for the Roman Catholics. He had attached himself to the cause of Lord Grenville. He was, therefore, a member of the small but influential body which had not entirely severed its connection with the Opposition, but was slowly gravitating towards the Tory Government. Plunket, like Grenville, had defended the conduct of the ministry on the occasion of the Manchester riots; like Grenville, he had supported the Six Acts; like nearly every other Irishman of distinction, he was warmly in favour of the removal of the Roman Catholic disabilities.

On the 28th of February 1821, Plunket made the usual motion that the House should resolve itself into a committee to consider the claims of the Roman Catholics. His speech was singularly eloquent and able. But the subject was already exhausted. Everything that could be urged on either side of the question had been repeated over and over again, and the debate therefore came to a rapid conclusion. By a majority of 6—227 votes to 221—the House resolved itself into a committee. The Roman Catholics had not obtained so great a victory for eight years. Two days afterwards Plunket followed up his success by proposing six resolutions in committee. The first two resolutions pointed to the repeal of all declarations required to be made against transubstantiation, the invocation of saints, and the sacrifice of the mass. The last four resolutions pointed to either the explanation or the repeal of the word "spiritual" in the passage of the oath of supremacy, affirming "that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within these realms." On the 7th of

His action in 1821.

[1] Plunket's *Life and Speeches*, vol. i. p. 26. Cf. the biographical notice of Plunket in the *Ann. Reg.* for 1854.

March Plunket introduced two bills based on these resolutions. The first of them removed every disability from the Roman Catholics, and opened to them every office, except the Chancellorship of England and the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland. The second gave the Crown a veto on the appointment of a Roman Catholic bishop by the Pope; and exacted an oath from every Roman Catholic priest pledging him to concur in the appointment of no dignitary of his Church except such as he should conscientiously deem to be of unimpeachable loyalty and peaceable conduct; and to have no correspondence with Rome "on any matter or thing which may interfere with or affect the civil duty or allegiance which is due to his Majesty."

The proposals which were thus made created a great diversity of opinion. Uncompromising Tories were of course alarmed at the progress which the Roman Catholic question was evidently making. Uncompromising Roman Catholics declared that the securities contained in the bills imposed intolerable restrictions on conscience. Politicians, incapable of raising themselves from an examination of the details of a measure to a consideration of its principles, occupied themselves in debating whether the Irish Chancellorship should or should not be added to the offices from which Roman Catholics were to be excluded, and whether the consent of the Crown to the appointment of each dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church should or should not be required. But, while differences of this character existed on the details of the measures, a steady majority was agreed in supporting their principle. The second reading of the Relief Bill was carried on the 16th of March by 254 votes to 243. Plunket, who had distinguished himself at every stage of the debate by his ability and moderation, was summoned to the deathbed of his wife in Ireland. But even his absence did not affect the progress of the bill. The new oath was carried in committee on the 23rd of March, by 230 votes to 216. The proposal which had wrecked the bill of 1813, that the Roman Catholics should be prevented from sitting in Parliament, was made on the 26th of March by

His Bills pass the Commons,

Bankes, the member for Corfe Castle, and was rejected by 223 votes to 211; and finally, on the 2nd of April, after the two bills had been fused into one, the third reading was carried by 216 votes to 197.[1]

The hopes of the Protestants, the fears of the Roman Catholics, were now concentrated on the House of Lords. There was some reason for hoping that the Peers would give way. Everything, it was thought, would turn in that House on the wishes of the king; and it was anticipated that George IV. might, for once in his life, be in favour of freedom. It was whispered that Lady Conyngham—the reigning favourite at Court—was disposed to support the bill.[2] It was known that the king was contemplating a visit to Ireland; and it was shrewdly surmised that he would desire to take a measure of conciliation with him.[3] But there was a still stronger reason for the hopes of the Roman Catholics and the fears of the Protestants. The bill had been supported in the House of Commons by a small but steady majority; but the mere numbers by which its success had been secured afforded the least proof of the strength of its supporters. It was no exaggeration to say that every single member of the Government with any reputation for ability, and, with one exception, every member of the House of Commons who had acquired any great position in debate, had supported the measure. The House of Lords, it might be thought, could hardly disregard the voice of a majority which included Castlereagh and Canning, Palmerston and Robinson, Wilberforce and Charles Wynn, Brougham and Mackintosh, Plunket and Grant, Tierney and Croker. But there was unfortunately one distinction between the House of Commons and the House of Lords. In the House of Commons every member of the Cabinet with any influence had supported the bill. In the House of Lords every member of the Government who had much weight in

[1] The debates will be found in *Hansard*, vol. iv. pp. 961–1034, 1066, 1269–1314, 1412–1468, 1523–1548; an abstract of them in the *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, pp. 29–41. See also Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. pp. 129, 141.

[2] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 148. [3] Ibid., p. 124.

debate was opposed to it. Liverpool, Eldon, Wellington, and Sidmouth were unanimous in desiring to resist the claims of the Roman Catholics.

The resistance of ministers might have been overcome. The result turned on the attitude of the royal family; and the royal family threw the weight of its influence into the scale against the bill. The second reading was fixed for the 16th of April; and, on the second night of the debate, the Duke of York rose to declare his sentiments upon it. Heir-presumptive to the throne of England, the Duke spoke with an authority which ought to have deterred him from speaking at all. "He was thoroughly convinced of the dangerous tendency of measures of this character; his opposition to them arose from principles which he had embraced ever since he had been able to judge for himself, and which he hoped he should cherish to the last day of his life." His Royal Highness's declaration settled the business. "It did more," as Eldon put it, "to quiet the matter than everything else put together." It was in vain that the example of the Duke of Sussex, who had spoken for the bill, could be quoted on the other side. The Duke of Sussex was one of the youngest of the king's brothers, and had no more influence than any ordinary peer. The second reading was rejected by 159 votes to 120, or by a majority of 39. Enthusiastic Tories, incapable of fore-casting the inevitable future, drank to the thirty-nine "who had saved the Thirty-nine Articles."[1]

but are rejected by the Lords.

The common rumours of the day, which were current in every direction, might, indeed, have abated the confidence of the extreme Tories. It was known that Liverpool desired to strengthen his ministry; and it was certain that every addition to its strength would weaken the Protestant party in the Cabinet. No one could doubt that a ministry which bought the Grenvilles at an extravagant price was not prepared to make any stout resistance to the Roman

Changes in the Government.

[1] Twiss's *Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 416. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. pp. 229–264 279–358. *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, p. 43.

Catholic claims. The impression which was thus produced was partially effaced by the subsequent appointment of Peel as Sidmouth's successor at the Home Office, and of Goulburn as Chief Secretary for Ireland. There was no doubt, at that time, of the firmness with which Peel was determined to oppose every concession to the Roman Catholics. Goulburn had taken a prominent part in resisting Plunket's bill. There was a true ring about these appointments which satisfied extreme Tories.

In the meanwhile the king paid his memorable visit to Ireland. The best results were anticipated from his Majesty's presence in Dublin; and the cordiality of his manner and the enthusiasm of his reception seemed to justify and confirm these anticipations. With all his faults, George IV. had considerable power in commending himself to those with whom he was thrown into close communication. Every one who was admitted to the dinner-table either of Carlton House or the Pavilion was won by the king's grace and courtesy. No two men were more unlike the king than Wilberforce and Scott. Yet the great philanthropist forgot all the king's faults in the pleasure of his society; and the great novelist almost succeeded in persuading himself that the king was an excellent sovereign. It was probably a greater effort to George IV. to entertain Wilberforce or Scott than to *pose* in a Stuart kilt in Edinburgh, or to drink the health of his Irish subjects in bumpers of usquebaugh in Dublin. It was probably a relief to his feelings to throw off all etiquette and to shake hands with the hundreds of his subjects who swarmed round his carriage and thought none the worse of him because his wife was only just dead and he himself was half-intoxicated. Never had Ireland appeared so loyal or so happy as during the king's visit. The sunshine of sovereignty had apparently dispelled the clouds of discontent which had enveloped the unhappy island. The clouds, however, occasionally return when the summer sun sets. Disaffection was renewed when the king's presence was withdrawn.

The King's visit to Ireland.

Disorder was, unfortunately, no new feature in the history

of Ireland. For one hundred and twenty years the utter lawlessness of the population had been the terror and the disgrace of the English Government. No real effort had ever been made either to enforce the law or to preserve the peace. Parliament had disabled the Roman Catholics from acquiring real property. So far back as 1711 the wild highlanders of Galway had made it difficult for the Protestants to hold a farm by houghing their sheep and cattle. Parliament had resisted the conversion of pasture into arable land; and white figures, known as Whiteboys, had been seen at midnight on the hills of Tipperary, whose track could be traced by the blaze of burning homesteads or the moans of wounded cattle. A great Protestant peer had the folly to impose a fine of £100,000 on his Antrim tenantry as the price of renewing their leases; and the Hearts of Steel, or Oakboys, as they were sometimes called, had risen to attack or to intimidate the incoming tenants. Parliament had neglected to enforce the provisions which it had made for disarming the Roman Catholics; and bands of Protestants had scoured the country at break of day and stripped the inhabitants of their arms. Seen always in the dawn of early morning, they were generally known as the Peep-o'-day Boys. Parliament had forbidden mixed marriages between Protestants and Papists; and women with money had been constantly carried off into the hills and forced into marriage with a brutality which reminds the reader of the ways and manners of primitive man. Parliament had insisted that the Irish should only export their wool to England; and the bales had been sent to France, either openly or in armed smugglers, which the revenue officers had not the power to seize. But the Government took no effectual measures to discover the houghers; they took no effectual measures to discover the Whiteboys; they took no effectual measures to stop the smuggling; they hardly hanged a single abductor of women. They neither blamed Lord Donegall for evicting his Antrim tenantry, nor interfered with the Hearts of Steel for avenging themselves on the incoming tenants. This utter carelessness could only lead to one result.

which is followed by disturbance.

Rioters, constantly left unpunished, were encouraged to rebel. A determination to enforce order in 1790 might have averted the rebellion of 1798. A few severe examples might have saved Ireland the bloodshed with which the revolt was ultimately quelled.[1]

Irish disorders.

From the time of the rebellion of 1798 to the date with which this history is at present concerned, Irish discontent had only been held in check by legislation which it is difficult to justify. In 1800 the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, and an Act for suppressing rebellion was passed; in 1802 these measures expired, but their expiration was followed by the riot in which Lord Kilwarden, the Chief Justice of Ireland, was unfortunately killed, and which is known in history as Emmet's rebellion. The Habeas Corpus Act was again suspended, and the Act for suppressing rebellion was again passed. These measures expired in 1806; but the west and south of Ireland were in such a state of insubordination that it was found necessary to send a special commission into the disturbed districts. In 1807 an Act, known as the Insurrection Act, was passed, authorising the Lord Lieutenant to suspend trial by jury, and rendering persons out of doors between sunset and sunrise liable to transportation. The Insurrection Act remained in force till 1810, when it was repealed Its repeal did not diminish the excitement which was the chronic condition of Ireland. In 1814 the Insurrection Act was re-enacted. It was continued in 1815, 1816, and 1817.

Ever since the Union the Irish Government had been almost constantly compelled to apply for exceptional powers for the government of Ireland; and notwithstanding the grant of these powers, Ireland had not been crushed into peace.[2] The condition of the Irish peasantry was such that peace was impossible. Ireland was suffering, she was to endure for

[1] Mr. Froude gives an excellent account of the disorders in Ireland in the eighteenth century. See especially vol. i. pp. 408-414, 417-434, 446-475; and vol. ii. p. 24. For the derivation of Whiteboys see Musgrave's *Rebellions in Ireland*, vol. i. p. 36. For that of Peep-o'-day Boys, ibid., p. 62.

[2] This statement of the repressive legislation applied to Ireland from 1800 to 1817 is taken from Peel's speech in 1829. See *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 742.

the next thirty years, a distress which has perhaps no parallel in the history of the world. Her population in the preceding quarter of a century had increased from 3,500,000 to 7,000,000 persons.[1] Her people had multiplied and were multiplying with the rapidity with which the English race has expanded in the unoccupied territories on which it has settled in America or Australasia. This fact explains the terrible destitution into which the Irish had fallen; and the historian, instead of investigating the causes of distress, has to ascertain the conditions which had made the multiplication of the people possible.

Causes of the increase.

Several causes, in the first instance, stimulated the growth of the Irish people. In 1782 Ireland obtained independence; in 1779 she secured free trade. Home rule increased the expectations which free trade had encouraged, and the Irish imagined that an era of new prosperity was before them. Their hopes, in the first instance, seemed certain of accomplishment. The woollen manufacture obtained a home in Dublin; the linen trade of Belfast seemed capable of indefinite expansion; and the light-hearted Irish married and multiplied without a thought beyond the wants of the hour. While they were marrying and multiplying, events were in progress in a neighbouring country which were to be more powerful than even penal laws in depriving Ireland of her trade. Hargreaves and Arkwright, Crompton and Cartwright, were perfecting their inventions; and machinery was replacing manual labour in every textile industry. These inventions, if they had stood alone, would have tended to aggregate industries in districts where iron was produced and machinery could be made. The tendency became irresistible when the engine which had been invented by Watt was applied to the jenny, the water-frame, the mule, and the loom. Steam, it became evident, was a cheaper and better motor than water,

Coal.

and a district without coal was thenceforward at a disadvantage. The population moved towards the coal-fields; and the woollen manufacture, which had previously

[1] I have taken here the mean of the estimates of 1791 and 1795 referred to in vol. i. p. 24 note.

been dispersed throughout England, was concentrated in the northern counties. The influences which affected Southern England were of course felt in Ireland. Dublin was beaten by Manchester and Leeds. Belfast was overtaken in the race for wealth by Dundee; and Ireland, without coal and iron, was gradually deprived of her manufacturing industries.

During the generation in which this industrial revolution was commencing, the Irish Parliament passed two measures of political justice, which, in their ultimate effects, inflicted terrible suffering on Ireland. In 1778 it enabled the Roman Catholics to take lands on long leases; in 1793 it extended the elective franchise to duly qualified Papists. The first of these measures naturally increased the demand for land, and in consequence raised its rent. But the lessees, drawn perhaps from a class without agricultural knowledge, by no means always retained the land which they thus acquired in their own hands. They sublet it, at a profit, to any applicants who applied for portions of it; and the creation of a cottier tenancy, which was thus encouraged, was stimulated by the Act of 1793, which extended to the Roman Catholics the elective franchise, which had been previously exercised by Protestants alone. An Irish landowner, who suffered imprisonment for his love to Ireland, called this Relief Act "that fatal measure, the ultimate cause of every succeeding calamity of Ireland,"[1] and this language hardly exaggerates the pernicious effects which resulted from it. Political influence was, at that time, the ready instrument for obtaining social distinction. Every Irish landowner could increase his influence by multiplying his tenantry; and forty-shilling freeholders could be created by the score or hundred on every hillside. Needy Irish landlords, bent on creating faggot votes, cut up their properties into little freeholds, which they recklessly granted on lives to any poor men who were ready to take them. The landowner derived an immediate benefit from this policy. In addition to augmented political influence, he secured a direct pecuniary advan-

The Relief Act of 1793.

[1] Cloncurry's *Recollections*, p. 34.

tage. He spent nothing on the slip of land which he granted to his wretched cottier. The mud hovel which the man erected on it, the rough fence with which he enclosed it, were raised by his own labour. What matter to the landlord whether the man lived or died, throve or failed, so long as he could rely on his vote at the next election?

A multiplication of freeholders was, indeed, only possible because the standard of living among the Irish was low, and capable of being made lower. Nearly two centuries before, Raleigh had introduced the potato into Ireland. With the single exception of rice, the potato is the cheapest food on which human life can be sustained. A barrel of potatoes, weighing four bushels or eighty pounds, is sufficient to support a person for thirty-six days. Ten barrels of potatoes, therefore, will feed a man for a year; and eighty barrels of potatoes, the ordinary produce of an Irish acre, will feed a family of eight persons for the same period. Two Irish acres of land would have been required to grow adequate wheat for the support of the same family; and an acre of land under potatoes was, therefore, capable of supporting twice as many people as an acre under wheat.[1] The potato made it possible for Ireland to support almost as many families as she had acres of her soil. While the war lasted, the consequences which the multiplication of the Irish people was preparing were only partly visible. The price of agricultural produce was high, the demand for labour was steady, and the army itself drew off to the battle-field a certain proportion of the more energetic youth. But, when peace ensued, the same circumstances which led to distress in England produced in an aggravated form distress in Ireland. The general fall in prices made it impossible for the land to bear the rent which it had previously paid. The wet summer of 1816 led to a universal failure of the harvest. Famine was

The potato.

Distress.

[1] Arthur Young's *Tour in Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 120. Arthur Young reckoned that the land under wheat would lie fallow every alternate year, and consequently placed the proportions as four instead of two to one. But the rotation of crops has affected his argument in this respect.

succeeded by typhus. From north to south, from east to west, all Ireland was visited with a misery which is only forgotten because its memory has been obliterated by the graver trials of the succeeding generation.

The experience of 1816 and the three succeeding years was already proving that the population of Ireland, which had doubled its numbers in a generation, was too large for the soil; but this fact, however clear in isolated localities to individual onlookers, was not appreciated by the community as a whole. Landlords, indeed, could not help perceiving that the policy, to which they had hastily committed themselves, of subdividing the soil, was mistaken; and absentee landlords hastily concluded that it was the business of their agents either to extract their rents or to eject the defaulting tenantry. English landlords, whose acquaintance with the management of land was confined to England, and who had knowledge of the kindly relations which on the whole subsisted between owner and occupier throughout the length and breadth of England, not unnaturally concluded that there was no good reason why a landowner should not be empowered to improve his property by evicting his tenantry. They failed to see that there were three reasons in Ireland which had no existence in England, which gave the tenant an especial claim. 1st. It was the universal custom in England for the landlord to provide the tenant with a farm complete in buildings and fences. It was the universal custom in Ireland for the buildings and fences to be provided by the tenant. 2nd. In England, agriculture was only one of the industries open to the labourer; in Ireland, there was hardly any industry except agriculture. 3rd. In England, the landlord might evict his cottager, but the land could not shake off the obligation which the poor law of Elizabeth threw upon it of supporting the poor; Ireland was without a poor law. In England, therefore, the ejected tenant was deprived of no property of his own making; and, even though deprived of his holding, was still a charge on the land. In Ireland the evicted cottier was turned out of a house raised by his own industry, and had

no legal claim for support. Eviction in England might turn a labourer into a pauper; eviction in Ireland was a sentence of death.

It may be hoped that the British Parliament failed to perceive the distinction which has thus been drawn between the English and Irish land systems. At any rate, it proceeded in 1816 to strengthen the landlord's hands by an Act avowedly passed to make ejectments more easy. By this measure it was enacted that, if a tenant were six months in arrears of rent, and either deserted his holding, or left it uncultivated, or carried off the stock and crop; and that if a tenant of less than £20 refused to deliver up land when his interest was determined; the landlord might recover possession by a summary process before the assistant barrister. By a subsequent section the provision, already in force in England, under which the landlord was entitled to seize the tenant's property and growing crops as distress for arrears of rent, was extended to Ireland.[1]

The Ejectment Act of 1816.

The first of these provisions virtually applied to all the land in Ireland. By a custom, which was universal, rent was always half a year in arrear. The more industrious cottier, who sought to add to his means of living by moving at harvest-time to England, could technically be supposed to have deserted his holding; and cottier tenants could be evicted—nay, were evicted—in their temporary absence from their homes by the score. The longer leases, granted after the Act of 1778, were of course expiring in the early years of the century; and the landlord had, therefore, especial facilities for clearing his property. But the provision which enabled him to distrain the growing crop furnished him with a still harsher weapon. For the crop was the property of the cottier; the rent was due from the middleman; and the cottier, after he had paid his rent to the middleman, was liable to have his crops seized—and in numberless cases saw his crops seized—in consequence of the middleman's default, by the landlord.

In theory, indeed, Parliament provided against this gross

[1] 56 Geo. III. c. 88.

injustice to the cottier. It declared that the occupying tenant, who had paid his rent to his immediate landlord, and who saw his goods distrained, in consequence of the landlord's default, by his superior landlord, might recover the sum so paid by civil bill. But, in practice, a remedy of this kind was no remedy to a cottier tenant. He was both too ignorant and too poor to go to law. In consequence, though the section of the Act which gave the landlord his remedy of distress was largely employed, the section which gave the cottier his remedy against oppression became practically a dead letter.[1]

Wrong-doing frequently produces its own punishment. Cottier tenants, evicted by the thousand, were almost driven to make war on society. It was deliberately stated in 1825 that a million persons in Ireland obtained a living by mendicancy and plunder.[2] Such a state of things naturally led to outrage.

In 1816 a Cashel magistrate, who had made himself unpopular, was doomed to die by the self-constituted authorities who governed Ireland with terror. The population waited on house-tops and ricks for the consummation of the catastrophe. The shot which caused the wretched victim's death was received with cheers. £13,000 was offered as a reward for the conviction of a murderer who must have been known to the whole hillside. No information was forthcoming. One individual was arrested on suspicion, and offered a free pardon to confess. The prisoner's wife visited him in prison, and implored him on her knees to die before he told a word.[3]

During the years which immediately succeeded 1817, indeed, outrages were less frequent. The people, overcome by famine and fever, had not even courage for disorder; but the return of better seasons restored the old crimes. In March 1821 some ruffians attacked the house

Outrages in 1821.

[1] *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. 265.

[2] Lords' Committee, 1825, p. 558.

[3] See Mr. Peel's speech in the House of Commons, 26th of April 1816.—*Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. p. 29.

of a Mr. and Mrs. Torrance, in the immediate vicinity of Limerick, demanding that arms should be delivered to them. Mr. and Mrs. Torrance had the courage to refuse them. The house was successfully defended, and the ruffians withdrew. The success of the defence, however, made Limerick no place for the Torrances to reside in. They were advised to remove, and they decided on going to a farm at Adare, a little to the south-west of Limerick, in the same county. One Sunday evening in June, while quietly walking with his wife along a frequented pathway, Torrance was suddenly attacked by two fellows armed with sticks and stones. Mrs. Torrance rushed to her husband's assistance. A terrible struggle ensued. Mrs. Torrance was beaten and stabbed to death, and Torrance was barely able to crawl away alive.[1] This outrage occurred in June. On another Sunday, in the following October, a Mr. Going, who had lately been in command of the Limerick police, riding quietly from Limerick to Rathkeale, was attacked by a body of armed men and shot dead. The money which he had with him was untouched; his watch was found on his body; while, within an hour of the crime, its completion was announced to the country by bonfires from all the hills and by a wild Irish yell of exultation from the villages.[2] Rathkeale is only a few miles from Adare. The Irish Privy Council, startled from their customary torpor, thought it necessary to proclaim the district. But the outrages continued to spread. The county of Tipperary marches upon Limerick. In November, a month after Mr. Going's murder, Tipperary was the scene of a still more horrible crime. A farmer named Shea evicted some cottiers who had declined to pay their rent either in money or, after the ordinary fashion of the Irish, in labour. In the middle of November Shea's house was attacked and fired by an armed banditti. Twelve people—Shea, his wife, his seven children, and three maid-servants—slept in the house. Five labourers occupied the adjoining offices. These wretched people, attempting to escape from the fire, were driven back

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 190.
[2] Ibid., p. 156; and Hist., p. 129.

by shots into the flames. The whole seventeen were burned to death.[1]

The Government was seriously alarmed at these terrible outrages. Winter was fast approaching; the South and West of Ireland were in insurrection against authority; and it was impossible to foretell what the long winter nights might bring forth. The generation was still alive which remembered the horrors of 1798, when an armed multitude, under the guidance of a priest, held undisputed sway over South-Eastern Ireland, and threatened to advance on Dublin. Troops were hurriedly despatched into the disturbed districts. A special commission was appointed to try the offenders; and Molony and M'Namara, the murderers of Mrs. Torrance, were hanged. Conciliation was at the same time resorted to. Lord Talbot, who had been Lord Lieutenant, was recalled; and Lord Wellesley, an Irishman by birth, and distinguished for his support of the Roman Catholic claims, was appointed to succeed him. Saurin, who had acted as Attorney-General for Ireland, was at the same time replaced by Plunket. It was supposed that these appointments might pave the way for a new system of government. It was hoped that the Roman Catholics might be encouraged to be peaceful, and that the Orangemen might cease be disorderly. A new era of internal union and tranquillity, it was predicted, would dawn on the unhappy country which from time immemorial had been the scene of disorders, of outrages, and of rebellion.

Alarm of the Government.

But the time was past when any mere change of men or measures could have accomplished such a result. Munster was in the possession of armed Whiteboys, or Rockites,[2] as they began to be called, who were acquiring fresh boldness from the failure of the authorities to repress them. Disturbance spread with alarming rapidity through Limerick, Cork, and Tipperary. Night after night organised bands of ruffians attacked the principal houses in

Spread of the disorders.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., pp. 172, 173.

[2] Moore (Memoirs, vol. iv. p. 112) says that the name of Captain Rock is said to be derived from the initials *R*oger *O'C*onnor *K*ing.

these districts, seized any arms or gunpowder which they found within them, and escaped with their spoil. The mail-coach from Cork to Killarney was attacked and seized in January; the return mail, sent on horseback, was intercepted, and the unfortunate man who carried the bags was murdered. The magistrates of Cork declared that they were incapable of dealing with the insurrection, which was daily gaining strength. The country was defenceless. Individuals, however zealous they might be, could not be expected to leave their own houses and families exposed to attack, in order that they themselves might perform the duties of police; and the real police force was inadequate to cope with the armed bodies of the Whiteboys. From Clonakilty to Skibbereen, in Cork, a distance of sixteen miles, there was a crowded population and six policemen. From Skibbereen to Crookhaven the distance was twenty-four miles, and there were only eight policemen. Lord Bantry endeavoured to make a stand against the insurgents with a force which he hastily collected, but he was compelled to withdraw. A detachment of the Rifle Brigade, encountering another band of Whiteboys on the borders of Kerry and Cork, was only successful after a severe skirmish. Munster, in fact, was in a state of insurrection. It could only be dealt with as an insurgent province.[1]

Irish outrages have, unfortunately, always worn a horrible form. The outrages of 1821 and 1822 were, unhappily, no exception to the universal rule. A farmer in Tipperary offended the Whiteboys. His cow was driven into a bog, where she perished; he sent his servant to remove its skin, and the man was shot in the middle of the day.[2] A clergyman in Cork let his tithes to his parishioners. An armed party entered the village, inquired of the farmers whether they had taken leases of tithes, and stripped and flogged those who had done so, "for violating the orders of General Rock."[3] Honorah Goold, a delicate girl, sixteen years of age, was taken from her brother's house

Their horrible character.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 7–14; Chron., pp. 14, 15, 20.
[2] Ibid., p. 74.
[3] Ibid., p. 143.

by an armed party in the middle of the night, placed on horseback, carried away to a solitary house, and treated in a manner to which death would have been preferable. Twenty days passed before the unhappy creature regained her liberty.[1] The coach from Limerick to Tipperary was stopped in broad daylight by an armed party, who took possession of another young girl, whose sole fault was the possession of a fortune of two hundred pounds. This girl was more fortunate than Miss Goold. Her captors were pursued by the Tipperary police, and compelled to drop their prize.[2]

These outrages, rapidly succeeding the king's visit to Ireland, disappointed the expectations of courtiers and statesmen. The king had been persuaded that his presence in Ireland would be productive of beneficial effects, and Ireland was more disturbed than she had been since the Union. The Irish Government decided that its first duty in the crisis was to preserve order. It consequently determined to take measures calculated to prevent the recurrence of disturbances. With this object it applied to Parliament in 1822 to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act and to pass an Insurrection Act. It only asked that the measures should remain in force till the 1st of August. Five years before, the Habeas Corpus Act had been suspended in Great Britain, in consequence of a riotous meeting in the neighbourhood of London. The danger in Ireland in 1822 was very different from the danger in Great Britain in 1817. Whiteboys, with guns in their hands, were more formidable adversaries than the Radicals. Captain Rock was a more unscrupulous opponent than General Ludd. In cases of extreme peril the Executive must necessarily be armed with exceptional powers; and it is difficult to see how the secret organisation of the Whiteboys could have been suppressed without a temporary infringement of some of the liberties of the people. Yet nothing but an extreme necessity can ever justify such a law as the Insurrection Act. Seven magistrates assembled in special sessions had the right to signify to the Lord Lieutenant that their county was

The action of the Irish Government.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 130. [2] Ibid., Chron., p. 63.

disturbed. The Lord Lieutenant might thereupon proclaim the county, or part of it, to be in a disturbed state, or in danger of disturbance. Every person living in the district was compelled by law to remain in his house from sunset to sunrise. Any justice of the peace might enter any house at night and declare such of the inmates as were absent idle and disorderly persons. All persons found out of their usual places of abode, except on lawful business, between sunset and sunrise, were also to be considered idle and disorderly persons. All persons administering illegal oaths or demanding arms; all persons having offensive weapons in their possession and refusing to give them up; all persons, not being travellers, found in a public-house at night; all persons, hawking or dispersing seditious papers or pamphlets, were to be considered idle and disorderly. Idle and disorderly persons hawking or dispersing seditious papers or pamphlets were to be liable to twelve months' imprisonment. Idle and disorderly persons committing any of the other offences specified in the Insurrection Act were to be liable to transportation for seven years.

Two other measures—one of indemnity, the other of precaution—were proposed at the same time. The former indemnified all persons who, with a view to the preservation of peace, but without legal authority, had seized arms or ammunition since the preceding November. The latter, which was to remain in force for seven years, imposed some restrictions on the manufacture, importation, and sale of firearms and gunpowder. The Habeas Corpus Suspension Act and the Insurrection Act received the royal assent early in the session on the 11th of February 1822. The Indemnity Act and the Arms Act became law on the 11th of March. Armed with these powers, the Irish Government set itself seriously to the task of suppressing disorder. Troops were marched into the disaffected districts. The lengthening days of spring and summer facilitated the operations of the authorities. A severe example was made whenever evidence was forthcoming. Three hundred and sixty-six persons were charged at the Special Commission in Cork alone. Thirty-

five were sentenced to death. Some of these were immediately executed; and the judge intimated that the fate of the remainder would depend on the future conduct of the peasantry. Resolute conduct of this description crushed Munster into order; but the Government did not feel able to dispense with the special machinery which it had demanded for preventing disturbance. Before the conclusion of the session it applied for the continuance of the Insurrection Act for another year. After some debate Parliament assented by a large majority to the application.[1]

In the meanwhile the suppression of disturbance had been followed by another evil. The autumn of 1821 had been exceptionally wet; the potatoes in many cases had rotted in the ground; disorder had not assisted the industry of the agriculturist; and men who were busy in collecting arms had found no time to attend to their little holdings. At the commencement of 1822 the peasantry had a smaller store of food than usual. The store every day grew smaller and smaller. The price of potatoes rose steadily and ominously in the market, till a stone, which had usually been purchasable for a penny or three halfpence, was not procurable for less than sixpence-halfpenny. While the little stores of each cottier peasant held out, no attention was paid to the imminence of the danger. The stores failed; the very roots which had been reserved for seed were consumed; and the wretched population of South-Western Ireland was suddenly overwhelmed with famine. The men, leaving their miserable allotments, crowded into the villages, clamouring for work which no one was able to offer them. The middle classes of society, partly dependent on the purchases of the cottiers for their own livelihood, were in almost equal distress. One-third of the inhabitants of Clare were reduced to a condition of starvation. Cork, Limerick, Mayo, Kerry, Roscommon, and Sligo were in a similar situation. The parish of Finloe contained 817 persons; 696 of these were in absolute want of food. In a parish in Clare the popula-

The famine of 1822.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 22, 29, 41–44.

tion, after mass, inquired what crimes were punishable by imprisonment, for they were willing to be sent to gaol for the sake of obtaining bread. At Tralee the poor were dying of hunger. It was no uncommon thing to see wretched persons fainting in the streets of Cork from mere want of food. Famine was attended by its constant helpmate, typhus. Fever had unfortunately been prevalent for years in parts of Ireland. The Irish members ascribed it to the window-tax, which induced the poor to close every opening in their houses, and to subsist without adequate means of ventilating their miserable dwellings. It was probably true that want of air aggravated a disease which penury and filth had originally encouraged. Famine rapidly increased its ravages among the distressed inhabitants of South-Western Ireland. The fever hospitals were crowded with patients; the poor died in their wretched hovels of disease and want. Outrage and insurrection disappeared, and the miserable peasantry sank into the peace which is the result of utter exhaustion.

Efforts to relieve it.

The Irish Government and the English nation did their duty nobly in the crisis. The fashionable world of London contrived to obtain some pleasure for its money, and gave a great ball at the King's Theatre, which produced £3500, for the alleviation of the distress. As much as ten guineas was given for a ticket by persons who considered themselves well repaid for their outlay by the splendour of the gay scene. In other respects the ball was not a success. The great ladies of the world of fashion quarrelled amongst themselves. The Duchess of Richmond would not admit Lady Conyngham as patroness; and Lady Conyngham proved too strong for the Duchess. These altercations were not decent. Some people doubted whether it were quite seemly to give a ball on the occasion at all. The fashionable world of London, it was thought, might have taken a better way of displaying its sympathy with Irish distress than by indulging itself with a display of unusual luxury and magnificence. Fortunately, London did something more than dance for the Irish. Relief committees were rapidly formed, and contributions, exceeding

a quarter of a million, were immediately collected. This admirable charity mitigated the horrors of famine. To augment the means of relief, Parliament placed a further quarter of a million at the disposal of the Irish Government, to be employed on works of public utility. These measures saved the Irish from actual death. With the approach of autumn and the new potato crop, the worst features of the famine were subdued; and the people, relieved from their fear, lapsed again into their normal condition of alternate ferocity and good-humour, gaiety and despair.[1]

The disturbances in Ireland had a discouraging effect on the advocates of Roman Catholic emancipation in Parliament. In 1821 Plunket had succeeded in carrying his relief bill through the House of Commons. In 1822 he doubted the expediency of introducing any measure on the subject. The session wore away without any step of the kind being taken. Though, however, no general measure of relief was proposed in 1822, an attempt was made during the year to remove one of the minor grievances of the Roman Catholics. On the 30th of April, Canning introduced a bill to repeal so much of the Act of Charles II. as prevented Roman Catholic Peers from access to the king, and from sitting and voting in Parliament. The 30th of Charles II. was passed under exceptional circumstances and under peculiar excitement. The legislature and the country were agitated with the story of a Popish plot; the king was suspected of something more than sympathy with the Roman Catholic religion; the heir to the throne was a member of the Roman Catholic Church; the perjured testimony of Oates was on every one's lips; and the fears of another period of Roman Catholic ascendancy in every one's heart. Under these circumstances Parliament proceeded to impeach Lord Stafford and to pass the Act of 1678. Seven years afterwards Parliament solemnly declared that "the late Viscount Stafford was innocent of the treason laid to his

Plunket's action paralysed by the disorders.

Canning's bill respecting Roman Catholic Peers.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 33-43; Chron., p. 98. Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 337.

charge, and that the testimony whereupon he was convicted was false." The legislature, in consequence, did its best to redress the wrong which it had committed, and reversed the attainder on Lord Stafford. But it did not proceed to repeal the Act which the disclosures at Lord Stafford's trial had originally suggested; and recusant Peers were consequently debarred from access to the king's person, and from sitting and voting in Parliament.

Lord Redesdale, who was one of the stoutest opponents of the Roman Catholic claims, but who was too shrewd to fall into the common error of defending an indefensible position, had the merit in 1791 of removing one of these disabilities. The Act of 1678 forbade access to the throne to Peers who could not conscientiously deny the "ecclesiastical or spiritual" authority of any foreign potentate within this realm. The Act of 1791 enabled the Roman Catholic Peer, prepared to deny the temporal or civil jurisdiction of the Pope, to go into the presence of his sovereign. "Was ever absurdity like this?" said Canning. "The Catholic Peer may drive directly to St. James's and demand admission to the royal presence. The cabalistic words, 'temporal and civil,' dissolve the interdiction of the Act of Charles II., and the closet doors fly open at the sound; but, if he turns his horses' heads from the palace to the Parliament House, the charm loses its efficacy: no entrance there except through the words 'ecclesiastical and spiritual,' followed up with a sworn opinion on certain controverted points of religious faith and worship. But," added Canning, rising into declamation of extraordinary eloquence, "the strange anomalies in the situation of Catholic Peers are not yet exhausted. . . . Imagine the ministers of foreign potentates collecting for their respective courts the details" of the coronation. "Who is it that overtops the barons as they march?—the Catholic Lord Clifford. Who is it that does homage to the throne on behalf of the highest order of the Peerage?—the Catholic Duke of Norfolk. Whom has the king selected to return thanks to this assemblage of all that is most splendid and most worthy in the realm, in acknowledgment of their

libation to his Majesty's health?—again the Catholic Duke of Norfolk. Did it occur to the representatives of Europe that the moment this ceremony was over, the Duke of Norfolk, highest in rank among the Peers, the Lord Clifford, and others like him, representing a long line of illustrious ancestry, were to be thrown by, like the lustres and banners that flamed and glittered in the scene, as useless and trumpery formalities?—that, with the pageantry of the hour, their importance faded away; and that he who headed the procession of Peers to-day could not sit among them as their equal on the morrow?"

The motion, thus eloquently recommended, was carried by 249 votes to 244.[1] Ten days afterwards the second reading of the bill was passed by 235 votes to 223.[2] On the 3rd of May the bill was read a third time—one of its opponents, unable to arrest its progress, thanking God "that there were three estates of this realm—the King, Lords, and Commons."[3] The staunch Tory was inaccurate in his statement, but his confidence was fully justified. The bill reached the House of Lords at the end of May. It was thrown out on the second reading by a majority of 42.[4] The division was larger than that on which Plunket's measure had been rejected the year before. The majority was greater than the majority of 1821.

The House of Lords had again refused to listen to the claims of the Roman Catholics. But the leading members of the Irish Government were bent on pursuing what the extreme Protestants of Dublin regarded as a Catholic policy. Lord Wellesley had acquired little popularity during his Lord Lieutenancy. He had offended the tradesmen of Dublin by his economies. He had offended the gentry of Ireland by carrying out a scheme, originally prepared by his predecessors, for the revision of the Irish magistracy. "In seven counties alone no fewer than two hundred noblemen and gentlemen had writs of *supersedeas* directed to them."[5] In these seven counties two hundred

The riot in Dublin in 1822

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. pp. 211–279.
[2] Ibid., pp. 475–518.
[3] Ibid., p. 673.
[4] 171 votes to 129. Ibid. p. 1262.
[5] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 53. Pearce's *Wellesley*, vol. iii. p. 361.

noblemen and gentlemen must necessarily have become the enemies of the Lord Lieutenant. A policy of this character disgusted the persons on whom the Irish Government had hitherto placed their main reliance. The lower orders were, in the meanwhile, in a state of ferment. The Roman Catholics complained that Goulburn, the new Secretary to the Irish Government, was an Orangeman; the Protestants pointed to the support which Wellesley was constantly extending to the Roman Catholics. The Irish had always associated particular days with riot and disorder; and the Dublin Protestants decided on a great demonstration on the 4th of November. It had been the custom on that day to decorate the equestrian statue which a previous generation had erected to the memory of William of Orange. The Orangemen, in 1822, decided that the custom should be observed with more than usual ceremony. The events of the time added a new significance to the demonstration. In ordinary years the decoration of the statue could only be regarded as a proof of Protestant ascendancy; in 1822 it could be accepted as a protest against the liberal leanings of the Lord Lieutenant. Wellesley had no fancy for a demonstration which every Irish Roman Catholic regarded as an insult both to himself and his religion, and he had still less fancy for a proceeding avowedly intended as a protest against his own measures. He persuaded the Lord Mayor of Dublin to forbid the decoration of the statue. The order served as a match to kindle the smouldering embers of Orange discontent into a flame. Exasperated as the Irish Protestants had been before, they had never received such treatment from any previous Viceroy. The Corporation of Dublin passed a vote of censure on their own mayor; the Irish merchants saw in the obscure occurrence a new reason for petitioning for the repeal of the Union. The determination of Wellesley to treat Dublin as he would have treated Calcutta had kindled the Irish capital into a flame.

On the 14th of December, before the excitement which these events occasioned had subsided, Wellesley attended the theatre. The Orangemen seized the opportunity to mark

their disapprobation of his proceedings. Placards with wretched doggerel upon them were circulated among the audience.[1] Wellesley was hissed as he entered the theatre. The disturbance increased as the performance proceeded. A large quart bottle and a piece of a policeman's rattle were thrown into the Lord Lieutenant's box, and order was only restored by the interference of the police and the arrest of the rioters. Respectable people in Dublin and Ireland were shocked at this outrage. Had the prisoners been prosecuted for an aggravated riot, "not a scintilla of sympathy would have been raised in their favour from one end of Ireland to the other."[2] Unfortunately, however, Wellesley was surrounded by weak advisers. They flattered his vanity; they exaggerated his importance; and they persuaded him to regard the riot as an attack upon his life. Wellesley, in consequence, became ridiculous among the persons who would, under other circumstances, have been the first to support him. "His Excellency has made a fine bustle of a playhouse row," wrote Redesdale.[3] Canning never lost an opportunity of quizzing "the bottle plot;"[4] and Charles Wynn, writing to Buckingham, described the Lord Lieutenant as "the Devil of a Vice Roy."[5] The prisoners who had taken part in the riot must have participated in Charles Wynn's feelings. They had apparently nothing to expect from the Irish Government. They were formally committed on the charge of conspiring to murder the Lord Lieutenant.[6] It was one thing, however, to obtain the committal of the prisoners; it was another thing to secure their conviction by a Dublin jury. Plunket, as Attorney-General, declined to press the capital charge. He stated, indeed, that he had abundant

The riot in the playhouse.

[1] "The Protestants want Talbot,
As the Papists have got all but,"
is a fair example of the doggerel. (See Pearce's *Wellesley*, vol. iii. p. 372.)

[2] So said Mr. Brownlow, who impugned the conduct of the Irish Government in the House of Commons.—*Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 969.

[3] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 264.

[4] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 427.

[5] "Diabolus Domini Vice Regis."—Ibid. p. 407.

[6] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, p. 55; and Chron., p. 237.

evidence to support it, but that he relinquished it because the laws were never so powerful as when administered in mercy. Plunket's moderation was not rewarded with success. After two days' deliberation the grand jury practically ignored all the bills against the accused persons. They acquitted all the five prisoners of a conspiracy to cause a riot; they found, in the case of only two of the prisoners, that a riot had been committed. Technically, however, two persons cannot commit a riot. The effect of the grand jury's finding, therefore, was to acquit all the prisoners of any offence known to the law.

The obscure riot in the Dublin theatre had already been honoured with too much notice. Plunket, however, declined to accept the decision of the grand jury. It was the custom in Dublin for each of the sheriffs to return the panel at alternate sessions. Sheriff Thorpe, on whom the turn had fallen on the occasion in question, was supposed to be a near relation to two of the accused persons. He had the imprudence to declare his intention of packing the jury; and Plunket, in consequence, had some excuse for declining to accept the judgment of a tribunal which had been expressly constituted to find against him. But Plunket's conduct, however capable of justification it might be, was imprudent. The *ex officio* information which he decided on filing against the prisoners only gave the accused one more triumph. The court, on the morning of the new trial, was thronged to overflowing. The prisoners appeared confident of success. Fifteen counsel were retained for their defence. The jury was what was called in Ireland "a good jury." There was no Roman Catholic upon it; there was no member of the Dublin Corporation upon it. Plunket, who was already known as the greatest advocate that Ireland had ever produced, surpassed all his previous achievements. His eloquence was so great, his case was so strong, that his friends relied on success, and the Orangemen gave way to despair. No Irishman need ever despair of an Irish jury. Old Lady Rossmore, who had survived to her ninetieth year, was brought forward to say that "it must have been an older woman than

Plunket prosecutes the rioters.

herself to be frightened by the proceedings at the theatre." A Dublin jury could not be expected to resist such testimony as this. At four o'clock on the fifth day of the trial the jury retired to consider their verdict. At nine o'clock they requested their discharge, as they were unable to agree. The judges locked them up to meditate during the night on the consequences of their differences. But the long night's reflection did not induce them to give in. At ten o'clock next morning they were fatigued with their night's fast, but they were still as far as ever from an agreement. At three o'clock in the afternoon Plunket consented to their discharge, as there was no prospect, even at that hour, of their arriving at a verdict.[1]

Abortive attack upon him in Parliament.

Plunket's conduct was naturally attacked in Parliament. His refusal to accept the decision of the grand jury was compared with the high-handed proceedings of Judge Jefferies, and declared to be without precedent in this country, and almost unprecedented in Ireland. The attack was led by Brownlow, the member for Armagh, who naturally reflected the opinions of a constituency which was distinguished for the extreme Protestantism of its views. But the attack, from its nature, was never formidable. The greatest blow which could have been given to the cause of the Roman Catholics would have been the recall of Wellesley or the dismissal of Plunket. The Opposition could not join in driving from the Irish Government the only two men who were in favour of Roman Catholic emancipation. Plunket, therefore, had not much to fear from the Opposition benches of the House of Commons. The men who objected the most strongly to his policy were the extreme Tories, who sympathised with the Orangemen, and who thought that too many concessions had already been made to Irish Papists; and extreme Tories who owed their seats in Parliament to the favour of the Administration could not vote against the Attorney-General for Ireland.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Chron., pp. 21*–28* *Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 997. Buckingham's *George IV.*, pp. 424–426.

In these circumstances both sides of the House were virtually muzzled. The Opposition objected to *ex officio* informations, but they would have objected still more to driving Plunket from office. The Tories objected to Plunket's position in the Administration; but they could not afford to defeat the Government. Plunket, therefore, had no great difficulty in meeting the attack upon his conduct. In the course of his defence he justified himself by impugning the conduct of the sheriff who had returned the grand jury. Sheriff Thorpe became almost instantaneously a red herring dragged across the trail of the fox. The House, which had been slowly tracking the conduct of the Irish Attorney-General, galloped off in full cry after the Dublin sheriff. Burdett at once gave notice that he should bring Sheriff Thorpe's conduct before the House. The sheriff was directed to attend; and day after day was occupied with a protracted investigation of his conduct. The long inquiry was not closed till the end of May. It was proved that Sheriff Thorpe was a violent Orangeman, but it was also shown that he had acted fairly in the particular case in which his conduct had been questioned. The House, after all its labours, wisely decided to let the matter drop, and to devote itself to other and more important business.[1]

Turned into an attack upon the sheriff.

The playhouse riot would, in all probability, have never obtained notoriety if Wellesley had been a little less vain or a little more prudent. But the riot, and the proceedings which resulted from it, would never have occurred at all, if it had not been for the irritation which Wellesley's system of government had produced among the Orangemen. Wellesley had been sent to Ireland to conciliate the Roman Catholics. He had found on his arrival that such a policy was impracticable without occasioning deep offence to the Orange party. Orangeism was prevalent among the ruling classes and in Dublin Castle. It was said that Goulburn, the Chief Secretary, had actually

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. pp. 667, 964, 1149, and vol. ix., a large part of which volume is filled with the report of the inquiry.

taken the Orange oath.[1] While Dublin was ringing with the news of Plunket's discomfiture an Orange dinner was given by the Beef Steak Club in Dublin. It was attended by Lord Manners, the Irish Chancellor, and by three of the Lord Lieutenant's household. The Lord Lieutenant's health was drunk in dead silence; the silence was emphasised by the band playing the tune, "Now Phœbus Sinketh in the West." Lord Talbot's health was then drunk with three times three; Peel's with nine times nine.

Lord Manners at the Beef Steak Club.

Wellesley was naturally offended at this demonstration; and unfortunately he had not the discretion to conceal his mortification. Manners' position was so exalted that the Lord Lieutenant dared not notice the Chancellor's presence at the dinner; but he showed his anger by dismissing the three members of his household who had been present at it. His resentment had little dignity; the news of it filled the Cabinet with apprehensions. It seemed impossible that both Wellesley and Manners could remain in Dublin; yet the recall of either of them would necessarily modify the whole aspect of the Administration. Every Irish Roman Catholic would regard the retirement of Manners as a victory for his Church; every Orangeman would consider the resignation of Wellesley as the triumph of the Dublin rioters. With some difficulty the quarrel was patched up. Manners made "a humble palinodia" to the Beef Steaks; Wellesley's ruffled dignity was composed; and the Irish Government was suffered to retain its neutral aspect.[2]

The ministry had encountered much embarrassment in its endeavours to conciliate the Roman Catholics. But it had not the courage to do more than pursue a neutral policy on the subject. The advocates of Roman Catholic emancipation were still in a minority in the Cabinet; and the time had not yet arrived when the complete concession of the claims of the Church of Rome could be made a Government question. The Cabinet, said Brougham on one occasion,

Canning and Brougham.

[1] Pearce's *Wellesley*, vol. iii. p. 333.

[2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 274. Buckingham's *George IV.*, pp. 429, 443.

"resembled the chequered appearance of the keys of a harpsichord, alternately black and white, down the whole line: the members of the Government were kept exactly opposed to each other, and the balance was merely trimmed so as to accommodate here a vote in favour, there a vote against the Catholics." The House laughed; and Canning in his reply dwelt on the impossibility of forming any Cabinet which should be unanimous on the Roman Catholic question. For the moment the subject dropped; but two days afterwards it was revived with a warmth which, at that time, was unusual in Parliament. Various petitions had been presented for and against the Roman Catholic claims. Burdett expressed his disapprobation of the "annual farce, carried on year after year, for a great length of time, conducive to no good purpose;" and, after alluding to the speech which Canning had delivered forty-eight hours before, declared that he declined to be a party to a deception upon the House and the country, and that he therefore intended to retire from the House when the Catholic question came on. Canning rose "to contradict flatly and *in toto*, in the honourable baronet's presence, the words which the honourable baronet had imputed to him."

The contradiction thus made infused still more heat into a debate which was already warm. At last, Brougham, forgetting the common courtesies of life, declared that Canning's conduct in accepting office in a divided Cabinet was "the most incredible specimen of monstrous truckling, for the purpose of obtaining office, that the whole history of political tergiversation could furnish." Canning, without waiting for Brougham to finish his sentence, rose to say "that that is false." A profound silence pervaded the House for some seconds, interrupted only by the Speaker expressing a hope that Canning would withdraw the expression that he had used. Canning declared that no consideration on earth should induce him to retract it. An uneasy discussion ensued, in the course of which Bankes proposed that both Canning and Brougham should be committed to the custody of the sergeant-at-arms.

There seemed, at one moment, a strong probability that the House would be compelled to commit both its leader and the most prominent member on the Opposition benches. Sir Robert Wilson had the dexterity to deliver it from this dilemma. He suggested that the words which had fallen from Brougham had reference to Canning's official character; and that Canning's interruption arose from the conviction that the imputation was intended to be personal. He thought that, if Canning would only avow that he had understood the words in a personal sense, and Brougham would declare that he had used them in reference to Canning's official capacity, both of them might be satisfied with these explanations. Canning and Brougham adopted Sir R. Wilson's suggestion; and an altercation which seemed likely to lead to grave results was allowed to drop.

A little boy of thirteen, earning a wretched livelihood in a London warehouse, was at that time gradually acquiring the knowledge of his fellow-men which was afterwards to enliven the most pathetic and most humorous stories of the century. A few years after the encounter between Canning and Brougham, Dickens entered the reporters' gallery of the House of Commons. Some member of it probably related to him the details of a scene which must have made a profound impression on all who had witnessed it. The incident was exactly suited to Dickens's sense of humour. He soon found an opportunity of turning it to account. Any one, who takes the trouble to compare the encounter between Brougham and Canning with the quarrel at the Pickwick Club in the opening chapter of "Pickwick," will see that Dickens did little more than write a liberal paraphrase of the memorable scene in the House of Commons on the 17th of April 1823. Peace had been restored in one case by the dexterous suggestion that the words had not been used in a personal sense, and passion was appeased in the other by the intimation that the words had been used "in a Pickwickian sense."

While the quarrel was still fresh, and Burdett's threat of secession was still unforgotten, Plunket rose to make his

motion in favour of the Roman Catholics. As he rose the Radicals left the House in a body. Plunket had to speak from a losing brief to an inattentive audience. His speech was short, and after the conclusion of it the House had no patience for continuing the debate. Its adjournment till the following day was negatived by a large majority. A proposal to adjourn it to the following week was met by a motion for the adjournment of the House, which was carried by 313 votes to 111. Outrages in Ireland and dissensions in Westminster had done their work. Nothing but the obstinacy of the Peers had prevented the emancipation of the Roman Catholics in 1821. The Roman Catholics could not command the votes of 150 members in the House of Commons in 1823. "As to our Catholic question," wrote Fremantle to Buckingham the next day, "it has gone to the devil."[1]

Rejection of Plunket's motion.

The Catholic question as a whole had gone to the devil; but some of the friends of emancipation were sanguine enough to imagine that they could still deal with it in detail. In 1822 Canning had endeavoured to secure the apparently unobjectionable concession that Roman Catholic Peers should be allowed to sit in the House of Lords. In 1823 Lord Nugent desired to admit the Roman Catholics of Great Britain to the elective franchise. It was difficult to see what possible reason could be urged for conceding a vote to a Roman Catholic in Ireland and for refusing a vote to a Roman Catholic in Great Britain. The Roman Catholic in Great Britain was as peaceable as any other of his Majesty's subjects, while the Irish Roman Catholics had for twenty years been in a state of chronic rebellion. The anomaly was so indefensible, that Peel himself, the ablest opponent of the Roman Catholic claims, supported Lord Nugent's proposal. With Peel's assistance the bill easily passed through all its stages in the House of Commons. But neither the influence of Peel nor the rapid progress of the bill in the Lower House affected the decision of the Peers. Some of the ministers, indeed, in the House of Lords imitated

Lord Nugent in 1823.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. pp. 1070–1123.

the example of Peel and supported the measure. Liverpool, Westmorland, and Harrowby spoke in favour of it. Eldon, however, made a strong speech against the bill. The heir-presumptive to the throne, the Duke of York, was "conspicuously active" against it. Sidmouth "slunk away without voting." The opponents of the bill were diligent in collecting proxies; its supporters were negligent in this respect; and the second reading was in consequence lost by 80 votes to 73.[1]

Another session had passed, and no concession had been made to the Roman Catholics. The prospect of Roman Catholic emancipation was fading away, but the difficulties of the Irish Government were continually increasing. In the South of Ireland the Roman Catholic population was still committing indefensible outrages. In Dublin and in the North the Orangemen were indulging in perpetual riot. Whenever Orangemen and Ribbonmen met in any numbers, a regular battle ensued. Firearms were constantly used, and lives were frequently lost at these encounters. In the meanwhile night after night daring outrages were perpetrated in Munster and Connaught. Houses were fired, cattle were houghed, arms were seized, and obnoxious persons were shot by men whom it was impracticable to detect, and whom it was therefore impossible to punish. The rioters moved in smaller bodies than in 1821 and 1822, but their proceedings were as daring and as formidable as they had proved in the preceding years. The ministry was discouraged by the continuance of disorders which it was unable to suppress. The soldiers and police were wearied out in an attempt to track incendiaries and depredators who vanished, like will-o'-the-wisps, in the bogs and fastnesses into which they beguiled their baffled pursuers. Nothing, in Wellesley's judgment, but a renewal of the Insurrection Act could enable the Irish Government to preserve tranquillity; and many members of the Opposition, ever ready to attend to Wellesley's wishes, assented to his view.[2] Wellesley, however, did not desire to

Fresh riots in Ireland.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ix. pp. 574, 1031, 1127, 1489.

[2] Ibid., pp. 218–239, 1147–1203. *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Hist., pp. 61, 62; and Chron., p. 50*. Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 469.

rely on preventive measures alone. Personally he was anxious to remove the chief excuse for Roman Catholic disorder by conceding Roman Catholic emancipation. As this policy was impracticable, he prevailed on the Government to deal with one of the chief grievances of which the poorer classes of the Irish complained.

Irish tithes.

Every Irishman would at once have stated that the tithe system constituted the chief of his minor grievances. The summary collection of an oppressive tax for the support of an alien Church would, in any circumstances, have produced resentment; but the conditions under which tithes were collected in Ireland were peculiarly irritating. The miserable cottier could not be expected to understand the justice of bestowing one-tenth of his little crop on an absentee incumbent, whose religion was not his own, while the rich Protestant farmer, who occupied some adjacent pasture, was exempt from tithe. The cottier, however, was by no means the only person who was entitled to complain of the tithe system. In the south and west of Ireland the tithe-owner was frequently unable to collect his tithes. His property, if he succeeded in collecting them, was the object of attack. "During the latter part of September" 1822, wrote Wellesley, "few nights passed without the destruction by fire of some building, haggard, or stacks of tithe-corn." "The incendiary was, of course, undiscoverable." "Undoubtedly throughout the whole country a general disposition prevails to invade the property of the clergy, to resist the payment of tithes, and to resort to every means of defeating all demands of the Church."[1] A single instance will sufficiently illustrate the persistence of this disposition. In the summer of 1823 the rector of Castlehaven, in Cork, found it impossible to obtain his tithes. In consequence he procured a distress-warrant, and ordered his proctor, with the help of five special constables, to execute it. A force of six men, however, could not have ventured to enforce the warrant in that lawless district. Four mounted and seven dismounted constables, under the command of a lieu-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Chron., pp. 51*, 53*.

tenant, were deputed to assist. The rector of Castlehaven had, in short, obtained the services of an armed force of eighteen men to collect his tithes. The little army achieved, in the first instance, some success. They seized a few cattle, and commenced driving them to the rector's premises. But the news of the affair spread rapidly among the neighbouring peasantry. The country people assembled in great numbers round the unfortunate party and plied them with volleys of stones. The police fired on the people; the people stoned the police. The police was compelled to abandon the cattle which they had seized and to beat a retreat. The retreat was not effected without loss. The proctor and one of the constables were killed, and others of the party were wounded. It was a poor consolation to the survivors that the peasantry had suffered equal losses. The spoils of victory had remained with the country people. The distress-warrant had not been executed; the rector of Castlehaven had not obtained his tithes.[1]

No Government could have allowed the continuance of such a system; and, in the course of 1822, the Administration endeavoured to apply a remedy to it. It carried a bill allowing the proprietors of tithes, with the consent, in the case of an incumbent, of the patron of the living and the bishop of the diocese, to let them on lease for twenty-one years to the owner of the land. The remedy, so far as it went, was a good one; but it was usually supposed to go a very little way indeed. Hume desired to enter into the whole question of the constitution of the Irish Church, and, in an elaborate speech, attacked the absentee incumbents, living in salaried idleness away from their cures.[2] Many members of the House of Commons, unprepared to adopt Hume's extreme views, were desirous of substituting some "full and liberal equivalent for the present precarious and vexatious mode of supporting the Established Church," and the ministry was forced to the conclusion that it must do

The Tithe Bill.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Chron., p. 85.
[2] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. pp. 1147 [illegible]

"something more effectual" than its own bill had contemplated.[1] Accordingly, on the 6th of March 1823, Goulburn introduced a bill to establish a composition for tithes. The bill empowered the Lord Lieutenant, on the application either of the incumbent of a parish or of a certain number of the tithe-paying inhabitants, to summon a special vestry of duly qualified persons for the purpose of making a composition for tithes. The incumbent was to appoint a commissioner; the inhabitants were to select another commissioner; the two commissioners, in the event of disagreement, were to nominate an umpire; and the commissioners or the umpire were to determine the amount of compensation to be paid to the incumbent instead of tithes. The sum so fixed was to be apportioned by special assessors among the various holdings in each parish which were not tithe-free. Land which was tithe-free was still to continue free of tithe. But it had been the custom in Ireland that agistment land, or land on which cattle were taken to be agisted or pastured, should be exempt from tithe. This exemption was now repealed;[2] and, as Ireland was a pastoral country, its repeal naturally largely increased the area of tithe-paying land, and diminished to a corresponding extent the burden of the tithe on each holding.

During its progress through Parliament Goulburn's bill was subjected to one modification of importance. As the bill originally stood, the commissioners appointed by the incumbent and the vestry could compel the incumbent to accept a composition against his will. In the course of the discussion some objection was made to this compulsory power, and the ministry consequently found it necessary to give way. An attempt was subsequently made to restore the compulsory clause in the House of Lords; but the attempt failed; and the bill, in its ultimate shape, was, therefore, only a permissive measure. A permissive tithes composition bill constituted, however, a considerable reform. The advance was the greater

[1] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 214.

[2] 4 Geo. IV. c. 99, s. 35. For a definition of "agistment" land see **Kerr's** *Blackstone*, vol. ii. p. 462.

because Liverpool plainly hinted his readiness to go further, should it prove necessary to do so. "It was better, in the first instance," he said, "to leave the subject open to voluntary operation, because the legislature had reserved to itself the power eventually, if it should be found expedient, of having recourse to a compulsory enactment."[1]

The bill had no sooner passed than the Irish Government forwarded a copy of it, with a brief abstract of its provisions, to every parish in Ireland. Before the middle of the following February 1033 applications—507 from the clergy, 526 from lay impropriators—had been made from different parishes for special vestries to carry into effect the proposed arrangements. In 240 cases a basis of agreement had already been found, the parties having themselves arranged the terms of the composition. Almost every class of persons in Ireland had displayed a praiseworthy readiness to subscribe to the principle of the measure. The clergy had been moderate in their demands; the vestries had been careful in their proceedings; and the holders of grass-lands alone had shown a not unnatural reluctance to subject their lands, which had hitherto been tithe-free, to the payment of tithes. Many proprietors of grass-land, however, had taken a more liberal view, and had exerted themselves to have the Act put in operation, from a sense of the benefits it would confer on Ireland.[2] The Tithe Act had, then, on the whole, been attended with a gratifying success; and, though Ireland was still the scene of outrage and disturbance, symptoms of improvement and of returning confidence were already visible.[3] The other measures of the Government, the revision of the magistracy and the improvement of the constabulary, proved beneficial, and quiet was gradually restored to the distracted country.[4]

Its success.

[1] The debates on the Tithes Bill will be found in *Hansard*, vol. viii. pp. 494–501; and vol. ix. pp. 366–376, 602–609, 802–810, 1434, 1452, 1489. See also *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Hist., pp. 63–65; and, for success of bill, Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. pp. 12, 13, 39.

[2] Goulburn's speech in House of Commons (*Hansard*, New Series, vol. x p. 851).

[3] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 71.

[4] Ibid., p. 89; and Colchester, vol. iii. p. 312.

There was, however, one feature in Irish politics which was far from reassuring. Outrages were being gradually repressed by the exertions of the authorities. Men were no longer murdered, cattle were no longer houghed, women were no longer carried off, stacks were no longer burned, amidst the approving shouts of a sympathising population; but the differences between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants were as great as ever. All Ireland was arrayed in two factions.

Associations.

The Protestant minority was enrolled in Orange Associations; the Roman Catholics had lately availed themselves of a more formidable union. The Orange Associations had their origin in the disorders which disgraced the North of Ireland in the closing decade of the eighteenth century. Bands of Protestants, under the name of Peep-o'-day Boys, had scoured the country and seized the arms which the Roman Catholics possessed in defiance of the law. Compelled by these outrages to organise themselves in their own defence, the Roman Catholics had formed themselves into bands of Defenders; and Defenders and Peep-o'-day Boys had fought a pitched battle in the neighbourhood of Armagh, in which the Defenders had been decisively defeated. The victors in the battle, retaining the organisation which had given them their superiority, formed themselves into societies, pledged by a secret oath to celebrate the battle of the Boyne and to maintain the Protestant ascendancy. These associations naturally irritated the Roman Catholic party; but they attracted comparatively slight attention till the latter end of 1822. Wellesley's appointment drove the Orangemen to extreme measures, and the riots which occurred in Dublin at the close of that year were mainly attributable to the dislike which Irish Protestants felt for a Lord Lieutenant with Roman Catholic sympathies. Wellesley's attention was thus forcibly directed to the proceedings of the Orange societies; and, at the commencement of 1823, he urged the Government to take steps for their suppression.

The Cabinet was still considering Wellesley's proposal, when its attention was directed to the subject by a motion in the

House of Commons. James Abercromby was a younger son of the distinguished officer who lost his life in Egypt in 1801. His family had been ennobled after his father's victory and death; and James Abercromby's elder brother sat in the House of Lords as Lord Abercromby. James Abercromby owed his seat in Parliament to the patronage of Lord Lansdowne. He shared on every subject the liberal opinions of his patron. Some experience in Parliamentary life, and considerable diligence in attending to his duties, made him an authority in debate. The honesty of his character ensured for him respect. Abercromby agreed with the majority of the Opposition in regretting the existence of the formidable societies which were distracting Ireland. He agreed with them in desiring to strengthen the hands of the Lord Lieutenant. But he was also anxious to regulate the Orange lodges. His motion was successful. Goulburn, the Chief Secretary, who was suspected of being an Orangeman, vigorously defended the action of the lodges, but announced the intention of the Government to introduce some measure for the suppression of secret societies. The announcement satisfied the House. Abercromby's motion was withdrawn; and an Act to prevent the administering of unlawful oaths in Ireland was passed before the close of the session.[1]

The Act, however, did not prove successful. The Orangemen proved too strong for the law; and the Orange lodges, instead of being suppressed, became more active and more numerous than ever.[2] The Roman Catholics, alarmed at the organisation of the Protestants, imitated their example, and "wherever an Orange society was introduced a Ribbon society was immediately formed."[3] Men in high office accepted posts of honour in the Orange lodges; and the priests of the Roman Church enrolled themselves among the Ribbonmen. The whole of Ireland, from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear, was thus organised in two camps, and either party was ready at any moment to exasperate the other.

[1] 4 Geo. IV. c. 77. *Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 443.
[2] Ibid., vol. xi. pp. 446, 662. [3] Ibid., p. 446.

It seemed impossible to devise a more formidable or a more serious system. But Ireland was on the eve of witnessing a much more dangerous organisation. In the course of 1823 a small body of Roman Catholic gentlemen met together in Dublin, ostensibly to prepare a petition to Parliament for obtaining Catholic emancipation. They were not deputed or authorised by any one to represent them; they were not, in the first instance, joined either by the Roman Catholic aristocracy or by the prelates of the Roman Catholic Church. The principal men among them were lawyers of reputation; and as they engaged at their periodical meetings in regular debates, which were prominently reported in the Irish newspapers, their proceedings gradually attracted attention. The attitude of the Orangemen, and a few heated speeches in Parliament, afforded them a pretext, or, as the Association put it, imposed on them "a just and imperious necessity, for calling the attention of the people to the perilous situation in which their lives, property, and liberty were placed at the mercy of a lawless, bigoted unrelenting faction, having no other religion among themselves but a professed hatred of all Catholics." The Association thus succeeded in becoming a rallying centre for Roman Catholics; and, as such a condition naturally occasioned some expense, it organised the entire country, appointing secretaries in every parish, charged with the duty of collecting a Catholic rent from the Roman Catholic population. The higher classes among the Roman Catholics, gradually awakening to its importance, joined the Association. The members of it regularly met in Dublin, mimicked the forms of Parliament, and debated every subject of interest to Ireland. As they avoided any sort of election, the best lawyers were doubtful whether the Association came within an Act which had been passed in 1793 to suppress the Association of United Irishmen.[1] A self-constituted legislature, practically

The Catholic Association.

[1] The Convention Act of 1793 forbad all assemblies "constituted and appointed to represent, or assuming or exercising a right or authority to represent, the people of the realm." The law officers' opinion (both English and Irish) on the possible application of the Act to the Catholic Association will be found in Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 247, 255. See also Froude's *English in Ireland*, and Sir H. Parnell, in *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 220.

exercising the power of taxation, and continually attracting greater attention, sat regularly in Dublin; and the Government was either powerless, or thought itself unable, to stop its proceedings.[1]

An association of this character was naturally dependent, to a great extent, on the persons by whom its business was guided. The Catholic Association had the advantage of a remarkable man for its founder. Daniel O'Connell was born in 1775. He was educated partly in France; and the excesses of the Revolution produced in him the same feelings which had exercised so much effect on Burke, Mackintosh, Wordsworth, and other men. He returned to Ireland, joined the Irish Bar, and gradually acquired the reputation of an eloquent and successful advocate. A great speech, delivered in Dublin in 1800 against the Union, increased his fame. He took part in politics, and his religion naturally induced him to desire the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. He became a leader—the chief among the leaders—of the Catholics. He was, in various ways, admirably qualified for such a position. He was sprung from a good family; he had inherited a considerable fortune; and he was possessed of great natural eloquence. From an Irish point of view, it was probably no disadvantage to him that he had unfortunately shot an antagonist in a duel. The sincere regret which he himself felt at this event was, in another way, of service to him. It accounted for and justified the determination which he was known to have formed never to fight a man again. O'Connell.

O'Connell was the life and soul of the Catholic Association. He suggested its formation; he managed its business; he was the chief orator at its meetings, the chief adviser at its counsels. But the Association began its operations in a very humble fashion. Its first meeting was attended by some three persons; and it only gradually secured the adhesion of the more prominent Roman Catholics. Its progress, however, created

[1] See, for this Association, *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. p. 941, and xii. pp. 168, 214. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 273, 290, 330, 362.

undisguised alarm among the Irish Protestants. Brownlow, the member for Armagh, presented a petition to Parliament for its suppression. Brownlow was an unfortunate person for such a purpose. He was a member of the Orange Society, prepared to maintain that the principles of that society were just, praiseworthy, and constitutional. Plunket, who replied to Brownlow, censured him severely for entering "an unlawful association," the "object of which was to overstep the pale of the laws, and to overawe and control the Government," and implied that he was ready to enforce the law both against Catholics and Protestants.[1] Brownlow's motion led to no definite result. But the Government, charged with the duty of preserving peace amidst the discordant elements around it, thought it necessary to apply for a renewal of the special machinery for doing so with which it had previously been intrusted. Parliament was accordingly asked to renew the Insurrection Act, and, after some discussion, consented to do so. The Opposition was only able to muster small minorities against the measure.[2]

Though, however, the Irish Insurrection Act was renewed, the legislature displayed an unexpected anxiety to probe the cause of the disease which was rendering such a measure inevitable. At a comparatively early period of the session, Lord Darnley, an Irish earl, moved for a select committee to inquire how far the provisions lately adopted by Parliament had tended to remove the grievances, to allay the discontent, or to secure the welfare and happiness of Ireland; and to ascertain what further measures of regulation or conciliation may be required to remedy the evils that had long existed in that country. Liverpool objected to a general inquiry of this nature, and Darnley's motion was rejected.[3] About a month after its rejection, however, a similar proposal was made in the House of

Motions on Ireland in Parliament.

[1] For the debate see *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. p. 943.

[2] It was read a second time on the 14th of June, by 112 votes to 23. *Hansard*, vol. xi. p. 1337. The third reading was afterwards carried by 52 votes to 14. Ibid., p. 1467.

[3] *Hansard*, vol. xi. p. 281.

Commons by a young nobleman who was gradually acquiring the confidence of the Whig party. Lord Althorp was the eldest son of the second Earl Spencer. Lord Althorp. His father had begun life as a Whig, had passed over to the Tories on the outbreak of the French Revolution; had become Privy Seal and first Lord of the Admiralty under Pitt; had resigned with his great leader in 1801; and had again accepted office as Secretary of State for the Home Department under the Talents Administration. His eldest son was born in 1782, and educated at Harrow and Cambridge. During his first two years at the University he gained great distinction. During the third year of his residence a love of the turf allured him from his books, and heavy gambling saddled him with debt. He had the rare courage, however, to withdraw himself from pursuits which would probably have proved fatal both to his father's fortune and his own career; and, after a short tour on the Continent, entered Parliament in 1804. No young man of ability and position ever seemed less likely to place his mark on the history of his age. A passionate love of sport kept him constantly from the House; extreme shyness prevented him from speaking; ungainly manners made him singularly unattractive in society. It appeared improbable that he would ever achieve higher distinction than could be won by a patron of the prize ring or a master of foxhounds.

Some years after Althorp's entrance into Parliament he was almost insensibly drawn by a series of peculiar events into the vortex of political warfare. In 1809 Colonel Wardle attacked the Duke of York. The charges against the Duke were exactly those which a country gentleman, mixing little with society and hating dishonesty, was likely to examine. Althorp formed a strong opinion against the Duke; and his feelings on the subject were so warm that he was induced to propose his Royal Highness's removal from the command of the army. The ice was broken by Althorp's speech. But his speech did more than break the ice. It introduced him to a small knot of Liberals, who, without much respect for the ordinary leaders

of their party, advocated what were then considered extreme measures, and insisted on the necessity of retrenchment and reform. His new associates soon urged Althorp forward. His marriage with a wealthy heiress improved his position. Her premature death increased his desire for work. Identifying himself more and more closely with the Reformers, Althorp was gradually induced to take an increasingly active part against the measures of the Administration; and "honest Jack Althorp," as he was called, gradually losing his shyness with practice, was always ready to raise his voice against any measure of oppression, or to lend his advocacy to any liberal proposal.[1]

Ireland was one of the subjects on which Althorp felt strongly. During his short tour abroad he had noticed with indignation the evident traces of Roman Catholic oppression. The wrongs of Protestants in Italy directed his singularly just mind to the wrongs of Roman Catholics in Ireland. He became, in consequence, an eager supporter of Roman Catholic emancipation. In 1824, however, the most hopeful politicians were beginning to despair of effecting the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. The terrible disturbances of 1821 and 1822 had reconciled the best friends of the Irish to the policy of repression; and in 1824 the House of Lords refused even to inquire into the causes which had made repressive measures necessary. About a month after its refusal, Althorp made a motion in the House of Commons for a similar inquiry. The Government, instead of refusing an inquiry, put up Goulburn to limit it to "the nature and extent of the disturbances that have prevailed in those districts of Ireland which are now subject to the operation of the Insurrection Act." Many politicians thought that there was very little difference between Althorp's motion and Goulburn's amendment. The amendment was, however, carried by a small majority. The appointment of Goulburn's committee in the Commons induced Liverpool to propose a similar inquiry in the Lords. Lansdowne, following Althorp's

[1] See Sir Denis le Marchant's interesting *Life of Lord Althorp*.

example, desired to extend the inquiry to the whole of Ireland. Lansdowne's amendment was, however, rejected by a large majority, and the limited inquiry suggested by Liverpool was sanctioned.[1]

The Roman Catholic question had now reached a new phase. The prospect of emancipation seemed as distant as ever; but the Cabinet had conceded the necessity of inquiring into the state of Ireland. During the same month in which this concession was made Lansdowne decided on reviving the bill by which in the previous year Nugent had endeavoured to secure the English Roman Catholics the elective franchise, and on simultaneously introducing two other bills to allow the English Roman Catholics to hold revenue offices and to become justices of the peace; and to enable the Duke of Norfolk to execute the office of Earl Marshal. Five Cabinet ministers, Liverpool, Harrowby, Westmorland, Bathurst, and Bexley, supported Lansdowne. But the House either distrusted the sincerity of the Prime Minister or rejected his counsels. Two of Lansdowne's three bills were rejected by large majorities, the House thus refusing to place the English Roman Catholic on the footing on which the Irish Roman Catholic had long stood. Any immediate prospect of relief faded away at the announcement of these decisive majorities.[2]

The determination of the Tories to refuse the smallest concession to the Roman Catholics induced the Liberals to attack the Established Church. In 1823, and again in 1824, Hume moved for an inquiry into the existing Church Establishment of Ireland. He was able to show that a considerable proportion of the beneficed clergy were non-resident; that many of them were pluralists; and that the incomes of the clergy were out

The rejection of emancipation leads to an attack on the Irish Church.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. p. 753.

[2] Ibid., p. 842. The majorities were 139 to 101, and 143 to 109. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 327. A bill to enable the Duke of Norfolk to sit as Earl Marshal was subsequently almost smuggled through the House of Lords. See *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. pp. 1455, 1470, and the protest against it, ibid., p. 1482. George IV. was very much annoyed at the success of this bill. Eldon, vol. ii. p. 522.

of all proportion to the work which they had to perform. Late in the session of 1824 the Bishop of Limerick succeeded in successfully disposing of a few of Hume's charges. He proved that some of the pluralists whom Hume attacked were really different clergymen bearing the same name. But the Bishop of Limerick's speech did not get rid of the main charge; and, in private, the strongest Tories admitted that "many of the unions" of Irish parishes had "been abominable jobs," which were hardly justifiable on the plea that "everything is always job in Ireland."[1]

The jobs did not only consist in heaping pluralities on well-connected clergymen. The church rate in Ireland was necessarily mainly levied on Roman Catholics; and the rate was constantly applied to illegal and indefensible purposes. Clerks were paid higher salaries than the law entitled them to receive. Houses were built for them at the expense of the parish; and Protestants were, in some cases, provided with prayer-books at the cost of the ratepayers.[2] Practices of this character disgusted the best friends of the Church; but even the knowledge of them could not reconcile them to an inquiry into the Church Establishment. Hume only secured sixty-two supporters in 1823 and seventy-nine in 1824;[3] 153 members voted against him on the last of these occasions. The majority was large enough to reassure any timid member of the House of Commons. But, large as it was, a minority of seventy-nine on such a subject excited some apprehension. Hume, wrote a contemporary chronicler, "found more supporters" than his "motion ought to have met with in a British House of Commons."[4]

Both Tories and Liberals had reason for dissatisfaction with the results of the session of 1824. Before the session had closed, the increasing boldness of the Catholic Association in Dublin was occasioning disquietude to the ministry. The Association was no longer com-

Increased activity of the Catholic Association.

[1] Lord Redesdale, in Colchester, vol. iii. p. 323.
[2] For the facts see *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xii. p. 619.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 418, and vol. xi. p. 588.
[4] *Ann. Reg.*, 1824, Hist., p. 33.

posed of a few clever lawyers in Dublin. The first men in Ireland were openly joining it. Its rent was regularly levied in every parish. Its addresses were openly read in every chapel. The Association took upon itself the most important duties. When a Roman Catholic was killed by a Protestant in a parish brawl, it appointed a counsel to conduct the prosecution. It issued an address calling upon the Irish to abstain from all illegal societies, "in the name of common sense, by the hate you bear the Orangemen, by the confidence you repose in the Catholic Association." Its organisation was so complete, the language of its leaders was so bold, that well-informed politicians contemplated the probability of an immediate civil war; and Wellesley was attacked for neglecting to suppress an association which was apparently threatening the disruption of the empire.[1] In the midst of this agitation, one Pastorius or Pastorini took upon himself to predict that the heretics were to be extirpated in 1825. Pastorini founded his prediction on some obscure passages in the Apocalypse. Its idle folly was denounced by the Roman Catholic Primate; but the prophecy was widely circulated and universally believed. The Roman Catholics looked forward to their victory. The Protestants declared that they were apprehensive of their massacre.[2] It seemed not impossible that the credence which Pastorini's prophecy obtained would produce the revolt which might accomplish the fulfilment of the prediction.

Alarming condition of Ireland.

The ministry was naturally alarmed at the threatening symptoms which were visible throughout Ireland, and at the increasing boldness of O'Connell's language. Bolivar was a favourite hero among Liberals in every country. It was with Bolivar's assistance that the South American colonies had acquired their virtual independence. Bolivar was still at the head of an armed force struggling against Spain. On the 16th of December, O'Connell, speaking at the Catholic Association, used words to the effect, "If Parliament will not attend to the Roman

[1] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 178. *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 179.
[2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 312. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 386.

Catholic claims, I hope that some Bolivar will arise to vindicate their rights."[1] The Government had been anxiously awaiting some opportunity for testing the legality of the Catholic Association, and O'Connell's language furnished it with a pretext for the prosecution it desired. The king, indeed, doubted the possibility of a prosecution at that particular juncture. To his infinite annoyance, the ministry had at last decided on recognising the South American colonies; and his Majesty thought it inconsistent to recognise Bolivar's work in one hemisphere and at the same time prosecute O'Connell for holding him up as an example in the other.[2] The king's doubts were to a certain extent shared by Wellington, but they were overruled by the great majority of the Cabinet. O'Connell's prosecution was not, however, attended with any satisfactory results. Some doubt arose as to the exact words which the agitator had used. The grand jury, which probably required an excuse for doing so, threw out the bill. O'Connell had the satisfaction of achieving a victory over the Government.

Bill for suppressing the Catholic Association.

The failure of the ministry only increased the universal apprehension at the power of the Catholic Association. Roman Catholic priests, hardly less ignorant and superstitious than their flocks, used reprehensible language in their pulpits, and all Ireland firmly believed in the approach of civil warfare. The Protestants declared that nothing could be done until the Association was suppressed; and the ministry at last decided to take measures for its suppression. When Parliament met on the 3rd of February 1825, the speech from the throne expressed "the gratification of his Majesty that Ireland" was "participating in the prosperity" which prevailed elsewhere; and that "the outrages, for the suppression of which extraordinary powers" had been

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 354. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 384. Some years before O'Connell had quoted Byron's lines—

"Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?"

—*Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 359. Pearce's *Wellesley*, vol. iii. p. 332. This quotation afforded an unfortunate commentary on the reference to Bolivar.

[2] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 377, 384, 394.

confided to him, had ceased. The speech, however, went on to express his Majesty's "regret that associations should exist in Ireland which have adopted proceedings irreconcilable with the spirit of the constitution, and calculated, by exciting alarm and exasperating animosities, to endanger the peace of society, and to retard the course of national improvement." His Majesty added that he relied on the wisdom of Parliament "to consider without delay the means of applying a remedy to the evil."

This passage in the speech, of course, attracted a good deal of attention. Brougham especially was particularly severe on the introduction of the word "associations" in the plural. "That little letter *s*," said he, "is one of the slyest introductions that Belial ever resorted to in any of those speeches which are calculated to

> 'Make the worse appear
> The better reason, to perplex and dash
> Maturest counsels: for his thoughts are low.'

I am perfectly aware, sir, by whom that *s* was added. I know the reflection which passed through the mind of the writer: 'I must put the word in the plural. It will then be considered as applicable to Orange as to Catholic Associations, and the adversaries of both will be conciliated.' Let not that little *s*, however, deceive a single person. However it may be pretended to hold the balance even between the Catholic and the Orange Associations, depend upon it, it will only be a nominal equality. The Catholic Association will be strongly put down with one hand, while the Orange Association will only receive a gentle tap with the other." Sir John Newport, an Irish member of ability, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland during the Talents Administration, endorsed Brougham's view. "It was quite clear, he thought, that against the Catholic Association this measure was directed, and against it alone."[1] These utterances on the part of the Opposition foreboded the kind of attack which the measure itself would receive. When Goulburn gave notice of his inten-

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. pp. 65, 102.

tion to introduce the bill, Brougham proposed a call of the House, "in order to show whether or not the cry of No Popery which had been raised was really countenanced by the constituents of honourable members."[1]

Goulburn introduced the bill on the 10th of February. The Government hoped to obtain leave for its introduction after two nights' discussion. At the end of the second evening Brougham moved the adjournment of the debate; and, as he declared that he was resolved to go on dividing, the debate was again adjourned till Monday, the 14th of February. Early on the following Wednesday morning leave was, at last, given to introduce the bill, and the protracted discussion terminated for the time.[2] On the Friday it was again revived on a motion of Brougham's that the Roman Catholic Association be heard by counsel. "Sir," said Brougham, "the bill before the House pronounces the condemnation of the Catholic Association. It puts that body to death. But, before it is thus doomed to destruction, it has a right to be heard in its own exculpation and defence." The plausible argument, however, fell on unwilling ears. The House had made up its mind to pass Goulburn's bill, and had no intention of adopting a motion which would inevitably delay its passage through Parliament. Brougham's proposal was rejected by a large majority.[3]

Both sides of the House had some reason to be satisfied with these debates. The ministry had so far carried its point. But progress had been so slow that ultimate success seemed still distant. "At the rate of four debates per stage," wrote Grenville, "it seems rather doubtful how soon, or rather how late, this bill may come up to the House of Lords."[4] The determined character of the opposition justified such an opinion. Yet the future progress of the bill was facilitated by the discussions which had already taken place. The subject was exhausted; the division lists had shown the ministry its strength, and the opposition its weakness. The

which becomes law,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 124.

[2] The motion was carried by 278 votes to 123.—Ibid., p. 521.

[3] By 222 votes to 89.—Ibid., p. 591.

[4] Buckingham's *George IV.*, p. 212.

second reading was carried on the 21st of February, after an unusually short debate, by a large majority.[1] A proposal of Hume's to exact from every office-holder in Ireland an oath, that "he does not now belong, and will not hereafter belong, to any association declared to be illegal," was rejected, on the 22nd of February, without a division;[2] and finally, on the 25th of February, the bill was read a third time and passed.[3] Its progress through the House of Lords was equally rapid. A motion that the Association should be heard by counsel was rejected on the 3rd of March. On the same evening the bill was read a second time; and on the 7th of March it was read a third time and passed.[4] Notwithstanding the vigorous opposition with which it had been originally assailed, the bill had become law within a month of its first introduction.

The bill, however, had hardly become law when it was discovered to be a failure. During the three years for which the Act was in force it remained a dead letter. The Act made every society illegal which was constituted for the redress of grievances either "in Church or State, renewing its meetings for more than fourteen days, or collecting or receiving money." The Catholic Association did not attempt to resist the law, it simply evaded it. The old Association was allowed to expire. A new Association was formed, "which professed not to discuss the question of Catholic emancipation, but to be formed for the purposes of education and other charitable purposes." The new Association convened once a week a separate meeting. The separate meeting was assumed to have no connection with the Association, and to terminate on the day on which it met. The Roman Catholic leaders had, moreover, the dexterity to avail themselves of the section of the Act which permitted fourteen days meetings. They held fourteen days meetings, and had the assurance to say that they were convened pursuant to Act of Parliament. Nor was the collection of the rent suspended.

and fails.

[1] 253 votes to 107.—*Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 611.
[2] Ibid., p. 635.
[3] Ibid., p. 710.
[4] Ibid., pp. 872, 899, 950. The majorities were very large.

Church-wardens were appointed in every parish for the purpose of collecting it; and, in order that its collection might be presumed to be made for charitable purposes, many of the contributors paid it in for the relief of the forty-shilling freeholders. O'Connell himself paid his quota "for all purposes allowable by law." The section of the Act which was directed against Orange processions proved equally useless. The Act made it illegal for the members of an illegal society to walk in procession, but it was judicially held that the law could not be enforced unless it was first proved that the individuals walked in the procession as an illegal society. Under these circumstances one part of the Act proved as useless as the other, and no attempt whatever was made to enforce its provisions.[1]

The Act, in short, failed; but it had one consequence which its originators had hardly anticipated. It increased the irritation of the Roman Catholics both in Great Britain and Ireland. It increased the desire of those politicians who sympathised with them to remedy their grievances. For nearly four years no serious effort had been made to carry the question of Catholic emancipation. The outrages committed by Roman Catholic peasants in Ireland, the quarrels of their friends in England, had effectually prevented anything being done. On the first day of March 1825, while the Association Bill was before the Lords, Burdett, against his own judgment, but at the instance of Lansdowne and Brougham, again brought forward the Roman Catholic question. Canning, who was suffering from gout, supported the motion, though he was too ill to stay for the division; and, in a full House, Burdett had a majority of 13.[2] The Roman Catholics had not gained so important a success for four years. On the 23rd of March Burdett brought in a bill to give effect to his victory. The

The Roman Catholic question revived.

[1] See *Ann. Reg.*, 1825, Hist., p. 44; and Sir R. Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 25, 26, 27, 31, 41, 46.

[2] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 217. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 371. *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 840. The numbers were 247 to 234.

bill was at once read a first time, and the second reading was postponed till after the Easter holidays.[1]

When the House met after the holidays, on the 19th of April, the earlier part of the evening was consumed in presenting and discussing petitions both for and against the bill. The debate on the second reading, thus delayed, was protracted through the evening, and was afterwards adjourned till the 21st of April. It was opened on the first evening by Brownlow, the member for Armagh, who had hitherto stoutly resisted every concession to the Roman Catholics, but who had the courage to avow his determination to support Burdett's bill. Brownlow's avowal produced a considerable effect on the House. The firmest opponents of the measure began to question the possibility of resistance when the Protestant member for Armagh was prepared to yield. The effect was increased when, later on in the debate, two other Irish members, both representing constituencies in Ulster,[2] expressed their concurrence in Brownlow's views, and their determination to reconsider their previous conclusions and support Burdett. Opinion was evidently swinging slowly round and pointing to a settlement of the Roman Catholic question. The probability of its settlement was indicated by the action of independent members. So long as no real prospect had existed of any relief being afforded, the House had been contented to confine itself to the abstract question of relief. As soon, however, as it became plain that concession was imminent, the feeling became general that concession should be accompanied by conditions. The majority of the House was in favour of emancipation, but they were also in favour of accompanying a measure of relief with some restriction on the elective franchise, and some provision for the payment of the Roman Catholic clergy. Before the Catholic Relief Bill was read a second time notice was given of an Elective Franchise Bill and of a Clergy Support Bill. These

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 1143.

[2] Mr. J. W. Maxwell, member for Downpatrick, and Colonel Forde, member for Downshire.

bills, it was supposed, would reconcile many waverers to Burdett's measure and help the latter on its way through Parliament. They became, in consequence, known as its "wings." With their aid the Relief Bill was read a second time, in an unusually full House, by a slightly larger majority than had been expected.[1]

The wings.

The two men who took charge of the wings were both destined to make a slight mark on the history of their age. Littleton, the member for Staffordshire, who introduced the Elective Franchise Bill, was a rich Staffordshire landlord, the owner of Teddesley, "an ugly house in an ugly situation;" a hospitable host, with good shooting and a bad cook.[2] Lord Francis Leveson-Gower, who introduced the Clergy Support Bill, was a younger son of Lord Stafford, a young man of considerable promise and of unusual tact. Littleton and Leveson-Gower both subsequently held the office of Irish Secretary. Both of them were raised to the peerage. Lord Francis Leveson-Gower became well known as Earl of Ellesmere. Littleton, after breaking up an Administration by his want of tact, was made Lord Hatherton. Leveson-Gower, in his "wing," proposed to set aside £250,000 a year for the State endowment of the Roman Catholic clergy. Littleton, in his "wing," proposed to disfranchise the 40*s.* freeholders in Ireland and to confine the franchise to persons having £10 a year in land. A 40*s.* freeholder in Ireland was a much less substantial person than a 40*s.* freeholder in England. In Ireland a cottier holding a freehold for life of the nominal value of 40*s.* annually was allowed a vote. The freeholder, in short, was little better than a leaseholder, and 40*s.* freeholders were lavishly made by Irish landlords for political purposes. These freeholders had hitherto been entirely dependent on the landlord who created them. The landlord usually allowed them to have half a year's rent in their hands. The slightest indication of

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiii. p. 123. The division was 268 votes to 241; but there were also 22 pairs. Cf. Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 240.

[2] Mr. Greville is responsible for these views—vol. i. p. 11.

independence on their part was met by a summons for back rent. The landlord reserved to himself the right of cutting turf. An independent tenant was at once debarred from exercising it. Nothing, then, could be more wretched or more dependent than the position of the 40*s.* freeholder. The House of Commons, impressed with this circumstance, read Littleton's bill a second time by 233 votes to 185. It subsequently adopted Leveson-Gower's proposal by 205 votes to 162. A tacit understanding was arrived at that the future progress of the wings should depend on the treatment which the Relief Bill received from the House of Lords.[1]

In the meanwhile the Relief Bill itself made rapid progress through the House of Commons. It passed through committee on the 6th of May, and it was read a third time and passed by a majority of 248 votes to 227 on the 10th of May.[2] Both sides expected the final settlement of the question. The Whigs, on their part, doubted whether the Lords could again resist the express wish of the Commons; the Tories conjectured that they were opposing the Roman Catholics "for the last time."[3] Peel himself, who had led the opposition to Burdett, and who still objected on principle to all concession, actually tendered his resignation.[4] He only withdrew it because he was assured that his retirement would be followed by that of the Prime Minister. For a short time the ministry was on the eve of breaking up.[5] The danger, however, was far less imminent than the Tories had imagined. Two days after the Relief Bill had been read a second time in the House of Commons, the Duke of York, in the House of Lords, presented a peti-

The Relief Bill passes the Commons,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiii. pp. 177, 182, 247, 336.

[2] Ibid., pp. 449, 558.

[3] The famous words of Peel. Lord Dalling, who admits that they will bear the natural construction placed on them in the text, argues that they may be taken as an indication of the speaker's own hesitation on the subject. This view seems, however, irreconcilable with Peel's character and his own account of his conduct. Lord Dalling's *Peel*, p. 37.

[4] See Peel's own statements, *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 731; and ibid., 3rd Series, vol. lxxxvii. p. 537.

[5] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 103. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 483.

tion against the Bill from the Dean and Chapter of Windsor. In presenting the petition, the Duke thought proper to make the most remarkable speech ever delivered by any member of the English royal family. After strongly arguing against the measure, he concluded by saying that "he felt the subject most forcibly, and that it affected him yet more deeply when he remembered that to its agitation must be ascribed that severe illness which had clouded the existence of his illustrious and beloved father. He should, therefore, conclude with assuring their lordships that he had uttered his honest and conscientious sentiments, founded upon principles which he had imbibed from his earliest youth, to the justice of which he had subscribed, after serious consideration, when he attained more mature years; and that these were the principles to which he would adhere, and which he would maintain and act up to, to the latest moment of his existence, whatever might be his situation of life. So help him God!"[1]

This celebrated declaration of the Duke's created a prodigious sensation. Sturdy Protestants had it printed in letters of gold and hung up in their houses or placarded on the walls of the metropolis. Practical Protestants contented themselves with a more concise expression of their sentiments; and manifested their approval of his Royal Highness's speech by the emphatic inscription, "Damn the King. The Duke of York for ever."[2] Calmer minds doubted, however, the propriety of language which was both inappropriate and indecent. It was obviously indecent in the Duke to assume the probability of his surviving his elder brother. It was obviously inappropriate to announce his determination, in the event of his survival, to resist the will of the people. Those who desired Roman Catholic emancipation saw, in the Duke's declaration, fresh reason for haste, lest his Royal Highness's accession to the throne should render success impossible. Wynn, though a member of the Government, openly avowed in the House of Commons his anxiety for despatch. Brougham, with much

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiii. p. 142.

[2] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 542. Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 241.

dexterity, treated the report of the speech as a libel of the reporter. "James the Second had never said anything one millionth part so scandalous as that which was attributed to the Duke of York in this libel. He trusted that an example would be made of the printer here, and the circulator in Ireland, of this atrocious paper."[1] The atrocious paper had, however, done its work. The Peers rallied to the Duke's support. The second reading of the Relief Bill was rejected by 178 votes to 130, or by a majority of 48. "God be thanked," was the pious reflection which the king wrote to Liverpool the next day.[2] Twenty-four rejoicing Protestants celebrated the victory, a few days afterwards, at a sumptuous dinner given by the Duke of York, and "drank the forty-eight, the year 1688, and the glorious and immortal memory of William the Third."[3]

and is rejected by the Lords.

The enthusiasm created by the victory was so great that Wellington desired to dissolve Parliament at once. A dissolution was, under any circumstances, inevitable in 1826, and the Duke naturally wished to dissolve at a moment when the opinion prevailing throughout the country was directly adverse to the claims of the Roman Catholics. Liverpool, however, to whom he made the suggestion, shrank from adopting the Duke's advice. The dissolution was postponed, and the Parliament of 1820 was eventually permitted to die of extreme old age in 1826. During the session of 1826, however, no further progress was made towards a settlement of the Catholic question. The Roman Catholics, disheartened by their recent defeat in the House of Lords, abstained from urging their friends to bring forward their case in the existing Parliament; and both parties awaited the result of a general election before making any further movement. The general election of 1826 in some respects justified the anticipations which Wellington had formed. In England intolerant Protestants raised a cry of "No Popery,"

The general election of 1826.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiii. pp. 172, 878.
[2] Ibid., vol. xiii. p. 766. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 451.
[3] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 554.

and so popular a candidate as Lord John Russell suffered a defeat in consequence. But in Ireland the election produced a different result. O'Connell decided on affording the British Government a new proof of the power of the Catholic Association. The county voter in Ireland had hitherto been miserably dependent on his landlord. Created for political purposes, he had marched to the poll in his landlord's train, and voted with undeviating fidelity as his landlord bade him. O'Connell determined to prove that a greater influence than that of the landlord had arisen in Ireland, and he selected for the purpose a county in which the landlords' influence had always been unquestioned. Waterford could almost be described as the property of the Beresfords, and Lord George Beresford, who had represented the county for some years, was in all respects an unexceptionable candidate. O'Connell took exception to him, and, at O'Connell's bidding, the 40*s.* freeholders rose in tumultuous revolt against their landlords. Lord Waterford's own tenantry marched forth against him, and Lord George Beresford, hopeless of success, had to retire from the contest.[1]

The Duke of York's last effort for the Protestants.

The events of the Waterford election naturally excited considerable consternation in England. The Duke of York's famous speech of the preceding year had made him the champion of the Protestant cause. But the Duke of York's declaration had lost half its force from his declining health. Seriously, if not dangerously, ill, his accession to the throne was becoming more and more improbable. From his sick bed at Weybridge, however, he made one last effort for the Protestants, and urged Liverpool to take a decisive course and bring the question at once to an issue. The Duke's advice evidently pointed to the formation of an exclusively Protestant Administration; but it was easy to show the king that such advice was at once impracticable, and also opposed to the principle on which the ministry had been constituted.[2] While the Duke was making one last effort

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Hist., p. 172.

[2] For this intrigue see Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 432; and Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 462.

against the Catholics, O'Connell was publicly declaring in Dublin that it was a mockery to say that the people of Ireland had not an interest in his Royal Highness ceasing to live. "If the Royal Duke shall not become converted from his political errors, I am perfectly resigned to the will of God, and shall abide the result with the most Christian resignation."[1] O'Connell's indecent language did perhaps more harm to his cause than the indiscreet advocacy of the dying Duke. English Protestants found one more reason for refusing to listen to an agitator who could stoop to attack an enemy on his deathbed.

Roman Catholic emancipation had thus, for many years, been occupying the thoughts of politicians. During the whole of the Liverpool Administration it had divided the Cabinet, it had distracted the House of Commons, and it had agitated the country. Parliamentary Reform had been advocated by many of the statesmen who had been conspicuous for their enlightened support of the claims of the Roman Catholics. But Parliamentary reform had hitherto made slower progress than the emancipation question. All the rising young men were in favour of removing religious disabilities; but the rising generation was by no means equally desirous of a reform of Parliament. Canning was the most eloquent advocate of religious equality, but Canning was the uncompromising opponent of every measure of Parliamentary reform. Rotten boroughs, close corporations, corrupt constituencies were defended by large majorities in both Houses of Parliament, and Parliamentary reform could hardly be reckoned in the category of practical politics. Yet the abuses which disgraced the representative system had been recognised for fifty years; and some of the foremost statesmen of the eighteenth century had endeavoured to remove them. No result, however, ensued from their labours, and the House of Commons remained unreformed.

Parliamentary reform.

The abuses of the representative system have already been described in a previous chapter of this work. In England

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Hist., p. 126.

and Ireland the county member represented the landed interest alone. The largest tenant-farmers, the largest manufacturers, and the largest householders had no vote. In Scotland the county member did not even represent the landed interest. He was elected by the few thousand persons who happened to enjoy the feudal superiorities of the land. The English and Irish borough member usually represented some wealthy individual; the Scotch borough member commonly represented a close corporation. Considerably more than one half of all the members of the House of Commons owed their seats to the direct interference of about two hundred and fifty fortunate individuals. Seats were bought and sold like tickets for the Opera, and bribery was almost openly practised in the few constituencies where the people had any share in the elections. Corruption extended from the constituencies to the House, and members of Parliament sold their votes to the ministry of the day almost as openly as they purchased the support of their constituents.

Representative abuses.

These abuses attracted attention, and produced an attack upon the representative system, which was held responsible for them. Lord Chatham, in 1766, declared that the borough representation was "the rotten part of our Constitution." "It cannot continue a century; if it does not drop it must be amputated." He suggested, in 1770, that a third member should be added to every county, "to counterbalance the weight of corrupt and venal boroughs."[1] Nothing came of Lord Chatham's proposal. The Whigs declined to support a project which was encouraged by popular agitation, and Reform was left for other statesmen to deal with. A man was soon found with courage to attempt the task. Wilkes's political career is memorable for the long struggle which he maintained with the Crown and with Parliament; and Wilkes, suffering from the persecution of the House of Commons, was naturally led to investigate the subject of Reform. In 1776 he asked leave to introduce a bill for disfranchising the rotten

Lord Chatham as a reformer.

Wilkes.

[1] May's *Const. Hist.*, vol. i. p. 327.

boroughs, for enfranchising rich populous trading towns, and for giving additional members to Middlesex, Yorkshire, and other large counties.[1] Wilkes failed, as Chatham had failed before him A radical Reform Bill, introduced by the Duke of Richmond in 1780, met with a similar fate, and the reform of Parliament seemed almost indefinitely postponed.

The session of 1780, however, in which the Duke of Richmond's motion was defeated, was memorable for the correction of some of the worst abuses of the Parliamentary system. It was in this session that Dunning carried his memorable motion against the influence of the Crown. It was in this session that Burke proposed his scheme of economical reform. It was in this session that a bill excluding contractors from Parliament was first adopted by the House of Commons. It was in this session that the first determined effort was made to disqualify revenue officers from voting. Two years afterwards the Rockingham Administration came into power, and two of the proposals which had been rejected in 1780 were adopted. Contractors were excluded from the House and revenue officers were disqualified from voting.[2] In the same year the second William Pitt resumed the subject of Reform at the point at which his father had left it. On the 7th of May 1782 he moved the appointment of a committee to inquire into the state of the representation. The motion was rejected by 161 votes to 141.[3] Fifty years afterwards, on the same day of the same month, a still more decisive majority apparently determined the fate of the great Reform Bill. The Peers decided by 151 votes to 116 that the question of enfranchisement should precede that of disfranchisement, and Lord Grey's Administration resigned. But the popular excitement which the decision of the Peers created in 1832 compelled the ministry to resume the reins of office, and carried the bill through all its remaining stages. No similar excitement was occasioned by the rejection of Reform in 1782; but, exactly one year afterwards, Pitt renewed his

Pitt.

[1] May's *Const. Hist.*, vol. i. p. 328.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1782, Hist., p. 180.

[3] Ibid., 1782, Hist., p. 181.

efforts. On the 7th of May 1783 he proposed three resolutions, affirming the necessity of preventing bribery and expense at elections; declaring the expediency of disfranchising any boroughs which from time to time might be proved to be corrupt; and proposing that an addition should be made to the number of county and metropolitan members. The House passed to the orders of the day by 293 votes to 149. The growing strength of the non-Reformers excited no surprise. In 1782 Pitt had spoken with the authority which attached to him as Chancellor of the Exchequer. In 1783 he was only a prominent member of the Opposition. When he next brought forward the question of Reform, he spoke with the authority of Prime Minister. The Reform Bill which he then proposed contemplated the disfranchisement of thirty-six boroughs, and the transfer of their members to the counties and the unrepresented towns. The novel feature of the measure, however, was the provision of a fund of £1,000,000 to be paid as compensation to the borough owners. Pitt proposed that the £1,000,000 should be at once set aside at compound interest, and allowed to accumulate till it became an irresistible bait to the borough owners. His proposal, however, was not successful. Fox condemned the offer of a bribe; Pitt's usual supporters looked coldly on the measure; the public out of doors displayed only a languid interest in it; and the bill was rejected by 248 votes to 174. Disappointed at his defeat, Pitt never again brought forward the question of Reform.[1]

The circumstances of the country during the earlier years of Pitt's ministry were not favourable to the Reformers. The king had become popular; his excessive influence had been checked; the press had acquired its freedom; the people were in enjoyment of their liberties; the industrious classes were largely benefited by an auspicious peace; and the wise financial measures of the minister promoted and augmented the general prosperity. An almost universal satisfaction checked any desire for change. With one solitary exception, the cause of Reform lay dormant and forgotten for seven years.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1783, Hist., p. 176; and 1784-5, pp. 189*, 190*.

But the calm which lay on the bosom of Europe was only temporary. The quiet was unduly ruffled by the Revolution in France; and the wild projects of the Republicans spread with unexpected rapidity over Europe. Parliamentary Reform was again demanded in Britain; and the demand was made with a fiercer voice than that with which it had been previously advocated. The Friends of the People drew up an admirable and unanswerable petition to the House of Commons. A young man, Charles Grey—whose name was to be heard of afterwards in connection with the question—was selected to bring the subject before Parliament; and the great orator of the Whig party—notwithstanding his policy in 1785—was prepared to support the motion. But the hurricane which was raging in France interfered with quiet consideration or calm debate. Pitt himself, contemplating repressive legislation, modified the generous opinions which he had inherited, and ranged himself with the non-Reformers. The violence of Paine and Godwin and other writers was used with crushing effect as an argument against change; and Grey's motion was rejected by 282 votes to 41.[1] Four years afterwards Grey again attempted to obtain a hearing for the Reformers. But the country was at war; the passions of the Tory party were excited against everything that was revolutionary; "the panic dread of change" prevailed which influenced Parliament for thirty years. Grey's proposal was rejected by an overwhelming majority; and the question of Reform was not raised again in a serious shape for another twenty years.

Modern progress increased the demand for reform,

While, however, statesmen were fondly imagining that they were stereotyping the old abuses which they persisted in regarding as indispensable, the stern logic of facts was fighting irresistibly against them. Great as were the anomalies which Chatham had detected in the representative system, the inequalities were becoming annually greater. The old rotten boroughs still continued to crumble to decay. No one ever contemplated building a cottage in Old Sarum or Gatton; no one thought

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1793, pp. 151–165.

of repairing the venerable ruin on the coast of Dorsetshire, or of reclaiming a single acre of submerged Dunwich. But a new England, breathing a new life, and hopelessly opposed to old traditions, was rising in other places. Hargreaves and Arkwright, Crompton and Cartwright, Watt and Boulton, Telford and Brindley, had unconsciously been doing the work of the Reformers. Manchester had grown from a tiny village to a mighty town; Birmingham was speaking with the voice of a hundred thousand people. Leeds and Sheffield had each fifty thousand inhabitants; Leith, Paisley, and Stockport had twenty thousand each. London, ever extending its limits, had spread far beyond its ancient boundaries; and Marylebone, Finsbury, the Tower Hamlets, Lambeth, and Greenwich were thriving suburbs teeming with humanity. None of these places had any representation. The busy town of Devonport had no member, but the neighbouring villages of Plympton and Saltash had two members each. The fashionable watering-place, Brighton, had no member; but the neighbouring hamlet of Seaford had two members. The short-sighted statesmen of the day thought that these anomalies were productive of the happiest consequences. Nothing in their view was so convenient as a nomination borough; nothing was so inconvenient as a contested election in a large constituency. "The grant of representation to the large boroughs," wrote the Prime Minister in 1821, "would be the greatest evil conferred on those towns: it would subject the population to a perpetual factious canvass, which would divert more or less the people from their industrious habits and keep alive a permanent spirit of turbulence and disaffection among them. . . . I do not wish to see more such boroughs as Westminster, Southwark, Nottingham, &c. I believe them to be more corrupt than any other places when seriously contested; and I believe the description of persons who find their way into Parliament through those places are generally those who, from the peculiarity of their character and station, are the least likely to be steadily attached to the good order of society."[1]

[1] Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. pp. 137, 138.

It is well to test uncompromising declarations of this character with the facts of the time at which they were written. At the general election of 1820, Sir Robert Wilson, an illustrious officer, had been elected for Southwark; Denman, the exemplary lawyer, had been elected for Nottingham; while, three years previously, the virtuous Romilly had been placed at the head of the poll at Westminster. The absence of Romilly's well-known figure, the presence of Denman, ought to have induced Liverpool to have reconsidered his hasty and inaccurate conclusion. His unjust remark recalls the reproof which Macaulay applied to one of his successors: "The first Minister of the Crown declared that he would consent to no reform; that he thought our representative system, just as it stood, the masterpiece of human wisdom; that, if he had to make it anew, he would make it just as it was, with all its represented ruins, and all its unrepresented cities."[1]

> "The dust of old Sarum is holy:
> In our hearts live her ramparts and towers:
> No progress: improvement is folly;
> The cause of Green Gatton is ours."

Such was the creed which the poet of the poor placed in the mouth "o' the canny."

The Prime Minister might declaim against the corruption of the large boroughs, but it would have required a greater man than Liverpool to have checked the growing passion for Reform. The anomalies of which the Reformers complained were so great that their redress was ultimately certain; and it so happened that an emphasis had been given to their arguments by another innovation. The commencement of the nineteenth century saw the first of the decennial censuses which, since 1801, have been regularly taken. Each census emphasised with fresh and ever-increasing force the striking disparity between the populations of the unrepresented towns and the represented villages. Each census enabled the Refor-

[1] Speech of July 5, 1831. Macaulay's Works, vol. viii. p. 33. The magnificent passage, which is not reported in *Hansard*, is an almost solitary instance of the use by Macaulay of an inappropriate word. The *cities* were mostly represented; the large *towns* were mostly unrepresented.

mers to appeal to figures, published on unimpeachable authority, in support of their arguments. Figures alone, indeed, would not have ensured their success. But the events which followed the war created an appetite for change. Never had England passed through a severer crisis than that of 1816. Industry was paralysed, labour was without employment. In many cases the landlord had no rent, the manufacturer no profit, the capitalist no interest, the labourer no wages. "The stars in their courses fought against" the Tories, and a wet and inclement season increased the universal gloom. Discontent was everywhere visible, and discontent gave an opportunity to political agitators which they were not likely to lose. The great meetings in the Spa Fields were held, and the ministry affected to believe in a project of universal insurrection. It was inevitable as well as desirable that the demand for Reform which was being raised out of doors should find some sympathy in the House of Commons; and, for the first time for twenty years, Parliament, in 1817, found itself face to face with a real popular demand for Reform. Night after night, at the commencement of the session, petitions for Reform were presented to the House of Commons. Lord Sefton was charged with one from Liverpool signed by 14,000 persons; Lord Cochrane brought up petitions from Bristol and Manchester with 15,000 and 30,000 signatures respectively. Sir F. Burdett on one evening submitted 527 petitions. Most of these petitions demanded a radical alteration in the constitution of the House of Commons. Many of them were couched in intemperate and improper language. Many of them were in print, and therefore irregular. Hours of valuable time were occupied in deciding the admissibility of some of them. The great Manchester petition was rejected. It was found that 468 out of Sir F. Burdett's 527 petitions were in print, and they were therefore rejected. These rejections weeded the petitions which had been presented to the House,[1] but they did not efface the impression which their presentation was intended to make. The petitions pointed, quite as plainly

which is strengthened by distress.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. pp. 234, 238, 860, 1002.

as the demonstrations in the Spa Fields and elsewhere, to the profound discontent which universally prevailed. A period of unprecedented distress and dissatisfaction had suddenly given new emphasis to the demands of the Reformers.

The same reasons, however, which had resuscitated the demand for Reform determined the majority of the House of Commons to resist the applications of the Reformers. Politicians who had refused to listen to the advice of Pitt were not likely to be intimidated into submission by Hunt and Watson. The chief champions of the Reformers in the House of Commons, moreover, were hardly more popular than the mob orators out of doors. No one doubted the gallantry of Lord Cochrane or the ability of Sir Francis Burdett; but Cochrane and Burdett were the last persons who were likely to influence an unreformed House of Commons. Cochrane avowed that he had had no scruples in practising the corrupt devices which he reprobated. He had been convicted of transactions on the Stock Exchange of a reprehensible description. His political friends, indeed, believed in his innocence of the charges for which he had been condemned; but the mass of his contemporaries had not yet formed the favourable view of his conduct which the leniency of a later generation has adopted. Burdett's political career was chiefly remarkable for his sensational contest with the Speaker in 1810. But his language had not become more temperate with his riper years. He had the folly in 1817 to denounce the assembly he was addressing as a House "falsely denominating itself the Commons House of Parliament."[1] A proposal introduced by Burdett and supported by Cochrane was not likely, therefore, to conciliate the House of Commons. A motion which Burdett made in 1817, for the appointment of a select committee on the state of the representation, was rejected by 265 votes to 77.[2] Its rejection was inevitable. The debate was chiefly remarkable for the declaration, which it elicited from one of the most rising members of the Whig party, that he "would as soon

Continued opposition to Reform in Parliament,

encouraged by Burdett's unpopularity.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. p. 317.

[2] Ibid., vol. xxxvi. p. 812.

part with Yorkshire as with old Sarum."[1] When such sentiments were openly expressed by liberal men, the task of the Reformers seemed hopeless. Burdett, however, was discouraged neither by the language of his friends nor by the summary rejection of his motion. Late in the session of 1818 he again brought forward the subject, and moved a series of twenty-six resolutions. The resolutions were perhaps the longest which were ever submitted to the House of Commons; they proposed the adoption of universal suffrage, electoral districts, and vote by ballot. They met with one of the most remarkable receptions which was ever given to any proposal in Parliament. Not a single member voted with Burdett, and 106 members voted against him. The injudicious proceedings of an intemperate politician had covered a great question with ridicule.[2]

In the summer of 1818 Parliament was dissolved. The general election in the autumn of the year aided to some extent the views of the Reformers. The keenness of the contest between the great rival parties was not favourable to purity of election, and the small boroughs in the West of England were notoriously disgraced by open bribery. Gross bribery was found to have been committed at Penryn; the corruption at Barnstaple was so general that the Grenville committee thought it right "to submit the same to the most serious consideration of the House;" the patron at Ilchester took the extreme course of ejecting 163 poor persons who had offended him by their conduct at the election; practices "the most corrupt" were proved to have taken place at Camelford; "and at Penryn, Barnstaple, and Camelford the sitting members were accordingly all unseated."[3] A strong minority in the House desired to disfranchise corrupt boroughs of this character and to transfer their members to some of the great towns, such as Manchester or Leeds, which had no representation. It so happened that a trial of an

Corruption in 1818.

[1] See J. W. Ward's speech, *Hansard*, vol. xxxvi. p. 767.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. p. 1185.
[3] Ibid., vol. xxxix. pp. 711, 933, 1353, 1448.

unusual nature, which occurred about the same time, assisted their contention. One of the members unseated at Barnstaple, who had been declared guilty "of bribery and treating," was Sir Manasseh Masseh Lopes, a baronet of Jewish extraction and considerable wealth. Sir Manasseh had expended £3000 on the election; he had bribed sixty-six out of the three hundred resident electors with five pounds each; and he had paid the outvoters, whose support he had received, twenty pounds each.[1] Nothing could be clearer than the corrupt condition of Barnstaple, or the misconduct of Sir Manasseh Masseh Lopes. The House of Commons, however, although it had unseated Sir Manasseh, was not inclined to do much more than laugh at his conduct. It was proposed that the boundaries of the borough should be enlarged; that a few additional voters should be thrown into it in this way; and that the electors should be left to resist as best they could the machinations of the next "Lothario"[2] who came to tempt them.

Sir M. Lopes.

Unluckily for Sir Manasseh Lopes, his conduct was brought before a less good-humoured tribunal than a Grenville committee. On the 18th of March 1819, Sir Manasseh was indicted at Exeter, before Mr. Justice Holroyd and a special jury, for bribery at a previous election at Grampound. In November 1815 Sir Manasseh had held an interview with one Hoare, a voter of Grampound, and had arranged with him to be returned for the borough for £2000. The money was nominally to be advanced as a loan, but it was in reality to be distributed among the sixty freemen who were voters for the borough. In 1817 Mr. Teed, also a candidate for the borough, obtained information of these proceedings, and taxed Sir Manasseh with bribery. Sir Manasseh offered to surrender his interest in the seat to Teed. He was advised—so he told Teed—that the lapse of two years from the payment of the money had relieved the electors from any liability for their

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. p. 1390.

[2] The name was applied to Sir Manasseh by Sir R. Wilson.—*Hansard*, vol. xl. p. 460.

conduct, and he abandoned his right to the seat to another candidate. Bribery, however, naturally succeeded. Teed was defeated, and preferred an indictment against Sir Manasseh. Mr. Justice Holroyd told the jury that, if they believed the witnesses, the case had been clearly made out. The jury returned a verdict of guilty without leaving the jury-box; and Sir Manasseh Masseh Lopes was sentenced to pay a fine of £10,000 and suffer two years' imprisonment.[1]

The conviction of Sir Manasseh Masseh Lopes for bribery marked the commencement of a new period in the history of Reform. The imprisonment of a member of the House of Commons, for proceedings not one jot worse than those which a hundred other members had notoriously committed, was a stern fact which was well calculated to make a profound impression. Burdett, indeed, again appeared as the champion of the Reformers; but the position which he adopted in 1819 was wholly different from that which he had assumed in 1818. A change of front was, indeed, inevitable. Lord Cochrane, Sir Francis's sole supporter in the previous year, was fighting the Spaniards on the coast of South America. Sir Francis, in 1819, only asked the House to take the state of the representation into its consideration early in the following session. The motion was defeated by 153 votes to 58; but it was remarkable for one short speech. Lord John Russell was the third son of the sixth Duke of Bedford. Born in 1792, he had been returned for his father's borough of Tavistock when he had not attained the age at which it was competent for him to sit in Parliament. Sprung from a family which for generations had been distinguished for the liberality of its opinions, his entrance into Parliament was welcomed by the Whigs; but his diminutive stature and his weakly frame would have made most people doubt his future eminence. With extraordinary capacity for debate, he had neither the presence of Peel nor the eloquence of Canning; and he was not regarded, therefore, on either side of the House as a very formidable champion.

Lord John Russell takes up the subject of Reform.

[1] The trial will be found in the *Ann. Reg.*, Chron., 1819, p. 210.

In the course of the debate on Burdett's motion in 1819, he stated, in a few sentences, the propriety of disfranchising the small boroughs, which were notoriously corrupt, and of reducing the duration of Parliaments; but he denounced as "wild and visionary" the schemes which Burdett had propounded.[1] Burdett attempted to reply to Lord J. Russell's attack. He begged the young lord who attacked him to point out the defects in his own principles and reasoning, and to undertake the task of reform himself.[2] He had, probably, no expectation that his invitation would be immediately accepted, and that the cause of the Reformers was on the eve of being transferred from his own injudicious guidance to the temperate young statesman who had just explained in a dozen sentences his views on the subject.

His earliest efforts.

Russell was not long without taking action on the subject. Four days after the rejection of Burdett's motion he prevailed on the House to resolve that "such a notorious system of corruption has prevailed in the borough of Grampound as to call for the serious consideration of this House;" and to pledge itself "to take the same into consideration at an early period in the next session of Parliament."[3] The next session was not, however, favourable for motions of this character. Parliament was hastily summoned before Christmas to agree to "the measures of severe coercion" which Castlereagh had the hardihood to propose. Parliament was hurriedly assembled after Christmas to be formally acquainted with the king's death and its own immediate dissolution. Short, however, as the period was which elapsed between the death of George III. and the dissolution of the Parliament of 1818, Russell endeavoured to carry in it an important measure of Reform. He asked the House to refuse the issue of writs to the four notoriously corrupt boroughs of Western England, Grampound, Penryn, Barnstaple, and Camelford. The House of Commons agreed to the bill which he introduced for the purpose, though even in

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xl. p. 1496. [2] Ibid., p. 1502.
[3] Ibid., p. 1516.

the House of Commons grave objections were raised to a proceeding which had no precedent in Parliamentary history. The criticisms passed on the measure in the Lower House of Parliament encouraged the Peers to reject it altogether. The bill was declared to be both unnecessary and unjust—unnecessary, because the approaching election would throw no impediment in the way of any punishment which Parliament might hereafter think it expedient to inflict on these corrupt boroughs; unjust, because it pronounced condemnation without evidence and without hearing the accused in their defence.[1] Fortified by these arguments, the Peers rejected the measure: Grampound was allowed, for one time more, to return members to Parliament.

Russell was not discouraged by his failure. The first Parliament of the reign of George IV. met on the 21st of April 1820.

Bill for disfranchising Grampound.

On the 28th of April Russell gave notice of a motion for the disfranchisement of Grampound and the transfer of the right of election to the borough of Leeds. On the 9th of May the bill which he introduced for the purpose was read a first time. To one part of the proposition which was thus submitted to it every section of the House of Commons was agreed. Corruption had been so general in Grampound that no one had a word to say in favour of the borough. Tories and Whigs were equally decided on its disfranchisement. But the widest differences arose as to the use which should be made of the seats which would thus be vacated. Castlereagh, desirous of minimising the change to be made, wished to extend the boundaries of the borough to the adjacent hundred. Precedent was in favour of the minister's suggestion. When Shoreham was disfranchised in 1771, the right of election had been transferred to the freeholders of the neighbouring rape of Bramber. A similar policy had been subsequently applied to Cricklade and to Aylesbury. Resting on these precedents, the ministry desired to extend the right of voting in Grampound to the freeholders of the hundreds of Powder and Pyder. The minister's proposal was

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 23, 24. *Hansard*, vol. xli. pp. 1637-1642.

at once resisted by Russell. The rotten boroughs, in his judgment, were like the dry bones in the prophet's vision: the dry bones could only be clothed with fresh vitality by transferring the representation to the populous places, which were continually acquiring fresh importance.

Russell was thus opposed to suggestions such as those which Castlereagh had favoured, and which received all the support of Canning's eloquence. But there was another party in the House of Commons which was equally opposed to the project of Russell and the counter-suggestion of Castlereagh. Such men as Charles Wynn disliked the notion of instituting a rather larger edition of Grampound; but they disliked still more the idea of creating new boroughs like Leeds. The preamble of Russell's bill increased their objections to it. It declared that "whereas the borough of Leeds, in the county of York, has of late years become a place of great trade, population, and wealth, it is expedient that it should have two burgesses to serve in Parliament." Such a statement, solemnly embodied in an Act of Parliament, would evidently lead to larger consequences than the disfranchisement of Grampound and the enfranchisement of Leeds. Manchester was a larger and more important town than Leeds; and it was obvious that the principle which was being applied to Leeds must ultimately be extended to Manchester. Birmingham was a more important town than Leeds. Sheffield was almost equal to Leeds in importance. If, in short, it were once admitted that it was expedient to give members to towns which had of late years become places of great trade and population, there was no saying where Parliament would be able to draw a line, or where the progress of Reform would be checked.

There was, moreover, another feature in the proposed enfranchisement of Leeds which alarmed the politicians of 1820. Russell desired to confer the franchise at Leeds on every five-pound householder. A five-pound franchise, Canning calculated, would admit 8000 of the inhabitants of Leeds to the suffrage. Liverpool, with a larger population, had only 4000 electors; and the grant of a popular franchise at Leeds would

inevitably lead to an irresistible demand for a popular franchise elsewhere. This consideration strengthened Charles Wynn's objection to the enfranchisement of Leeds. It suggested the alternative which he himself proposed for the transfer of the two members for Grampound to the great county of Yorkshire. But these differences of opinion as to the use which should be made of the two seats did not affect the progress of the measure. The second reading was agreed to without a division on the 19th of May. A motion for going into committee upon it was made on the 5th of June. Almost at the hour at which Russell's motion was made the queen was setting out from Dover and driving to Canterbury. Ministers, at last persuaded of the reality of the queen's return, were hurrying from the House to deliberate on their policy; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pleading the absence of the Cabinet as an excuse, persuaded Russell to consent to the adjournment of the debate for a week. The week passed; but it was obviously hopeless after its expiration to resume the consideration of the Grampound bill. Castlereagh declared that if Russell should bring on the discussion he would himself retire from it. The threat, however, was unnecessary. The alleged misconduct of a queen was a much more interesting subject than the proved misconduct of a few score Cornishmen; and Grampound won another year of grace from the circumstance of her Majesty's return to England.[1]

Very early in the following year the queen's business was, at length, concluded. Parliament, relieved from the melancholy duty which had been imposed upon it, was once more at liberty to attend to its immediate business. Russell availed himself of the opportunity to reintroduce his bill. But the criticisms which had been applied to it in the previous session induced him to make one important amendment in it. In 1820 he had proposed to confer the franchise on all five-pound householders. In 1821 he decided to restrict the franchise to ten-pound householders. The bill thus altered came before the House early in 1821. The House rejected, without a

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. pp. 39, 237–241, 480–520, 864–867, 1039.

division, the claims of the neighbouring hundreds of Powder and Pyder to the two seats of which every one was determined that Grampound should be deprived; it rejected, by 126 votes to 66, the rival claims of Yorkshire for the representation which Russell desired to confer on Leeds.[1] The success of the bill seemed to be assured by these divisions. It was assailed, however, in an unexpected manner. Stuart Wortley, the member for Yorkshire, suddenly proposed that the qualification of each voter in the new borough should be the occupation of a £20 instead of a £10 house. The proposal entirely altered the character of the measure. The bill as it stood would have conferred the franchise on 6000 or 7000 persons. The bill, with Stuart Wortley's amendment engrafted on it, would only enfranchise about 2000 persons. This very reason, however, was the main recommendation of the amendment to the timid majority of the House of Commons. Stuart Wortley's motion was carried, and Russell dropped the bill.[2] Wortley, however, himself persevered with the measure which was thus abandoned. The bill was easily carried through its subsequent stages in the House of Commons, and was brought up to the Lords.

It might possibly have been expected that a bill disfranchising a rotten borough, and enfranchising no one who was not a £20 householder in Leeds, would have been accepted without much discussion in the House of Lords. The bill, however, when it reached the Upper House, provoked a great deal of debate. Debate was, in fact, inevitable, for the members of the Cabinet were more divided on the subject of it than any other set of persons. Eldon simply desired to disfranchise the electors of Grampound who had been proved to have been bribed; Liverpool wished to confer the two new seats on Yorkshire; and Harrowby strongly objected to giving four members to a single county. Notwithstanding the decision of the House of Commons to the contrary, and the protests of the great Yorkshire magnate, Lord Harewood, Liverpool's proposal was adopted.[3]

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. iv. pp. 603, 606. [2] Ibid., p. 1075.
[3] Ibid., vol. v. pp. 631, 974.

The bill, thus amended, in opposition to the decision of the House of Commons, was returned to the Lower House of Parliament. The Commons had the good sense to accept the amendment, instead of entering into a dispute with the Peers, which must have involved the loss of the measure. Grampound was accordingly disfranchised; the two seats were given to Yorkshire; and Russell gave notice that in a future session he should call the attention of the House to the claims of large towns to representation.[1]

Scotch representation.

Parliament had, at length, taken one important step in the direction of Reform. A notoriously corrupt little borough had been deprived of its members; the representation had been transferred to the largest of English counties. A warning had been given to every rotten borough; a precedent had been instituted which was capable of application to scores of constituencies. The Scotch boroughs were not so corrupt as the English boroughs. Gross corruption implies a certain amount of independence; and the Scotch voter, as a rule, had not even the opportunity of selling his vote. The borough members were in Scotland returned by the corporations; and, as the corporations were self-elected, their political opinions were as constant as their heraldic bearings. Self-elected corporations, however, occasionally make mistakes. In 1817 the magistrates of Montrose actually presumed to elect themselves by ballot. It was the first occasion on which secret voting had ever been applied to any municipal election. The authorities, shocked at the recklessness of a municipality which was capable of committing so palpable an illegality, decided on quashing the election, and on issuing a warrant altering what was called in Scotland the "set" or constitution of the borough. Instead of the old councillors electing the new, the warrant authorised the burgesses to elect their own magistrates. It so happened that soon after the issue of this warrant an irregularity occurred in the election of magistrates at Aberdeen. Aberdeen was one

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. p. 1046. The disfranchisement of Grampound only took place from the succeeding dissolution.

of the worst examples of an unreformed corporation. The borough was bankrupt; the revenues were insufficient to pay the interest of its debt; the magistrates were themselves of opinion that some change should be effected in the manner of electing the council, and that an effectual control should be given to the citizens over the expenditure of the town's office-bearers. An opportunity for reforming Aberdeen occurred in 1817. By the constitution of the borough forty persons were appointed to take part in the annual election of the magistrates. In the absence of one of the forty, a person possessing the qualification of the absentee was required to be elected as proxy for him. In 1817 a proxy was elected who could not prove that he was a burgess. The Government, on being made acquainted with the facts, "reduced" or voided the election. Instead, however, of declaring a poll election, and authorising the burgesses to elect their own magistrate, as they had already done at Montrose, the Government authorised the magistrates to proceed to a fresh election. The magistrates at Aberdeen, in their judgment, had innocently fallen into a trivial error. The magistrates at Montrose had wilfully resorted to an illegal ballot. No treatment could be too tender for Aberdeen; no remedy could be too drastic for Montrose.[1]

Very early in the session of 1818 Lord Archibald Hamilton drew attention to the case of Montrose. Lord Archibald was the son of the ninth Duke of Hamilton; he was member for Lanarkshire; and he was brother to the "Dragon" Lady Anne Hamilton, the most faithful friend whom Queen Caroline ever secured. Lord Archibald moved for a copy of the warrant of his Majesty in Council authorising the burgesses of Montrose to elect their magistrates. Castlereagh thought that a motion of this character might lead to Parliamentary Reform. The Lord Advocate repeated his leader's apprehensions. "If it were intended to introduce a new system of election in all the boroughs, it would have the same effect as a sweeping measure of Parliamentary

Lord Archibald Hamilton,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 1278, 1281, 1282, 1296.

Reform." Lord Archibald did not venture to divide after this declaration; and his motion was accordingly rejected without a division.[1] But the short debate, and a threat of Lord Archibald's to call attention to the boroughs generally, convinced the Government that it was necessary to do something. On the 10th of April the Lord Advocate introduced a bill for the better regulating the revenues of the royal boroughs of Scotland. He proposed that the magistrates should be compelled to publish their accounts, and that the Court of Exchequer, on the complaint of five burgesses, should have the power of controlling the expenditure.[2] The remedy was a mild one; and, mild as the measure was, it was not persevered with. Its introduction, however, created a profound impression in Scotland. Six-sevenths of the population of the royal boroughs petitioned for Reform. Hardly a single petition was presented on the other side.[3] Hamilton, finding his case thus strengthened, moved that all the petitions should be referred to a select committee, "to examine the matter thereof, and to report their observations and opinion thereon to the House." It was in vain that William Dundas, speaking with the authority which his name gave to him, resisted all change. It was in vain that Canning warned the House against the experiments of rash speculators in Parliamentary Reform. Two months before, on the 3rd of March, the ministry had been defeated by Mackintosh on the Criminal Laws. Four days before, Grattan's motion for Roman Catholic emancipation had been carried in the teeth of the Tories. Hamilton's motion was now adopted by 149 votes to 144, or by a majority of 5.[4]

obtains a committee on the royal boroughs.

The committee, which was thus appointed in 1819, was revived in the new Parliament of 1820, and practically continued its labours for three years. Early in 1822, Hamilton, after referring to the numerous abuses which the reports of the committee had disclosed, moved that the House should resolve itself into a committee of the whole House upon the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxvii. pp. 423-438.
[2] Ibid., p. 1291.
[3] Ibid., xxxix. p. 1167.
[4] Ibid., vol. xl. p. 197

royal boroughs of Scotland. He dwelt on the absurdity of allowing the magistrates to elect their own successors, and insisted on the necessity of instituting some more popular method of election. But the ministry was not ready to adopt his views. It was willing to impose some checks on the expenditure of the public funds by the magistrates, but it was unwilling to adopt any remedy which would open the door to Reform. The temporary force which petitions had imparted to Lord Archibald's motion was expended; the Opposition, ignorant of Scotland, were languid; Lord Archibald was defeated by a majority of 81 votes to 46; and the Lord Advocate's counter-proposal was adopted. Some checks were placed on the expenditure of the royal burghs; some restrictions were enforced against the improvident creation of debt; but the boroughs themselves were unreformed; the magistrates were allowed to go on electing their own successors; and the whole population of the towns of Scotland were excluded from the franchise as completely as the settlers in the backwoods of Canada.[1]

The labours of Russell had resulted in the disfranchisement of one rotten borough, and in the grant of two additional members to one great county. The labours of Hamilton had not been rewarded with even this partial success. Concurrently, however, with these proceedings, the Reformers were agitating for a more general measure. It has been noticed that an Englishman, when he is particularly in earnest, is fond of indulging himself with a good dinner. On the 4th of May 1821 the Reformers celebrated their cause by a great dinner at the London Tavern. Some of the most popular members of the Whig party in the House of Commons attended the dinner; and Lushington, who had been associated with Denman and Brougham in the defence of the queen, distinguished himself among them all for the vigour, or rather the violence, of the language which he used at it. Burdett, suffering three months' imprisonment for a

The Reform dinner at the London Tavern.

1 *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 81. 3 Geo. IV., c. 91. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vi. pp. 519-555.

letter which he had written reflecting on the conduct of the Manchester magistrates,[1] was, of course, unable to attend the banquet. He addressed, however, from his prison a letter to the company, the language of which was perhaps less violent, but unquestionably more personal, than Lushington's speech. Alluding to Canning's known opposition to Reform, he wrote: "That Mr. Canning—I mention him as the champion of the party—a part for the whole—should defend to the uttermost a system by the hocus pocus tricks of which he and his family get so much public money, can cause neither me nor any man surprise or anger—

> 'For, 'tis their duty, all the learned think,
> To espouse that cause by which they eat and drink.'"

The language was so strong, the imputation so gross, that Canning thought it necessary to notice it. He waited till Burdett was liberated from gaol, and then sent Lord William Bentinck to him with a challenge. Burdett disclaimed all intention of making any personal allusion; Canning acknowledged his frankness and promptitude in doing so; and the affair was allowed to drop. It is now only worth reviving as an instructive illustration of the ways and manners of leading public men half a century ago.[2]

The episode between Burdett and Canning had been easily concluded. The attitude of the Reformers in Parliament provoked two great debates in the session of 1821. Lambton, the member for Durham, brought forward the subject on the 17th of April. Lambton was in favour of electoral districts and household suffrage. The debate which he raised lasted through the entire night, and was adjourned till the following day. It was evident, however, that the House took only the faintest interest in the proceedings. The benches were empty, Lambton was himself absent, and a general desire arose to conclude the subject. A division was loudly called for by the few members who were present, and the motion was disposed of by 55 votes to 43.[3] The

Debate on Reform in 1821,

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 26. [2] Ibid., p. 93.
[3] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. pp. 359–453.

defeat of Lambton's motion, however, prepared the way for a more formidable opponent. On the 9th of May, Russell asked the House to adopt four resolutions, affirming the prevalence of corruption and the expediency of giving representation to wealthy and populous places. The House again displayed an extraordinary impatience of discussion. A division was loudly called for the moment Russell's seconder sat down; and the House listened with evident impatience to a short speech from Bathurst, who represented the Government on the occasion, and who moved the previous question. Bathurst's motion was carried by 155 votes to 124,[1] and the question of Parliamentary reform was thus again indefinitely postponed.

Russell, however, still persevered with his favourite project. A good many circumstances conspired in 1822 to encourage him to do so. The continuous distress of the agricultural classes led to extraordinary excitement in the rural districts. Language was held in quiet country parishes which had previously only been heard in the largest and most disorderly towns. The Reformers found enthusiastic audiences in country gentlemen and tenant-farmers, and the great agricultural counties petitioned for Reform in the most vehement language. Unexpectedly backed by the classes which had hitherto been distinguished for their unprogressive Conservatism, Russell, on the 25th of April, moved "that the present state of the representation of the people requires most serious consideration." The debate which ensued was chiefly memorable for the speech with which Canning concluded it, and which was long afterwards remembered for the extraordinary vigour of its eloquence, and for the uncompromising determination of the orator to oppose all Parliamentary reform. "A change in the constitution of the House of Commons," said Canning, "is the object of the present motion. That such a change is necessary the noble lord asserts, and I deny. I deny altogether the existence of any such practical defect in the present constitution of this House as requires the adoption of so fearful an experiment. That the noble lord will carry

and in 1822.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. p. 624.

his motion this evening I have no fear; but, with the talents which he has shown himself to possess, he will no doubt renew his efforts hereafter. Although I presume not to expect that he will give any weight to observations or warnings of mine, yet I cannot help conjuring him to pause before he again presses this motion on the country. If, however, he shall persevere, and if his perseverance shall be successful, and if the results of that success shall be such as I cannot help apprehending—his be the triumph to have precipitated those results—be mine the consolation that to the utmost and the latest of my power I have opposed them." The magnificent peroration delighted a House which was fond of eloquent declamation. But, magnificent as the declamation was, the Reformers mustered in strength in the division which immediately followed. Russell was defeated by 269 votes to 164.[1] The minority, however, was the largest which the Reformers had assembled since the early days of Pitt's Administration.

During the remainder of the Parliament of 1820 little further progress was made by the Reformers. In 1823, indeed, Russell renewed his efforts. The continued sufferings of the agricultural classes created a strong desire for considerable changes; and the farmers, rebelling against their ordinary leaders, passed Radical resolutions at the dictation of Cobbett and other agitators. Strengthened by the support which meetings of this character afforded him, Russell, at the commencement of the session, moved for a select committee to inquire into the number of voters in each constituency. The motion was resisted by Canning, and defeated by 128 votes to 90.[2] Without allowing himself to be disheartened by this defeat, and stimulated to further action by the petitions for Reform "which crowded the table of the House," Russell, at a later period of the session, brought forward another motion in favour of Reform. The effect of agricultural discontent

In 1823.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 68–79. *Hansard*, vol. vii. pp. 51, 136, 139. Mr. Lowe concluded one of his great speeches against Reform in 1866 in almost the exact words which Canning had thus used in 1822. *Hansard*, Third Series, vol. clxxxii. p. 164.

[2] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. p. 187.

was visible in the division list. Sturdy Tories, like Sir Thomas Lethbridge, supported Russell; but his motion, notwithstanding their support, was rejected by 280 votes to 169.[1] Three years elapsed after this defeat before Russell ventured on renewing his favourite motion. Towards the close of the session of 1826, when the Parliament of 1820 was dying of extreme old age, he made one more effort for the cause of the Reformers. But the eve of a general election was an unfortunate period for raising the subject, and he was defeated by 247 votes to 123.[2] In the same session, however, he achieved a more gratifying success in a kindred enterprise. He obtained leave to introduce a bill for the better prevention of bribery at elections. The bill proposed that disputed elections should be referred to a select committee chosen by lot. The measure met with only moderate support. Despairing of passing it through Parliament, Russell dropped his bill, and in the last week of the session proposed two resolutions committing the House to its principle. The resolutions led to a sharp debate, and resulted in a division, in which each side secured 62 votes. The Speaker, amidst some excitement, gave his vote with the Ayes, and the resolutions were accordingly carried.[3]

In 1826.

Russell's persevering efforts had done little or nothing towards the reform of Parliamentary representation. Hamilton's attempt to extend the electoral franchise to the Scotch people had, in the meanwhile, been equally unsuccessful. Up to 1822, Hamilton had mainly occupied himself with exposing the abuses inherent in the royal boroughs. In 1823 he drew attention for the first time to the state of representation in the Scotch counties. The right of voting in Scotch counties, it has already been stated, was confined to the feudal superiors. The total number of persons thus qualified to vote in all Scotland amounted, in 1820, to only 2889. No other Scotch county had so many voters as Fife; yet the electoral franchise in Fife was confined

County representation in Scotland.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. p. 1287. [2] Ibid., vol. xv. p. 714.
[3] Ibid., vol. xiv. pp. 1003, 1365; and vol. xv. pp. 733, 1410.

to 240 people. The feudal superior, moreover, had not necessarily any real landed estate in the county: his superiority was frequently disjoined from the land.

Late in the session of 1823 Hamilton drew attention to this anomalous state of things, and proposed a series of five resolutions, embodying the facts of the case, and affirming the necessity for some alteration in the system. He did not contemplate any very radical measure of Reform. He desired simply to extend the franchise to the owners of real property in each county, and thus "to establish some connection between the right of voting and the land." Such a proposal was obviously moderate. The franchise which Hamilton desired to introduce in Scotland already existed both in England and in Ireland. It required some ingenuity to discover any danger in extending to Scotch proprietors a privilege which was already enjoyed by English and Irish landowners. The Tory party opposed Hamilton, less from any objection to the particular proposal which he was advocating, than from a dislike to touch the question of Reform at all. The Whigs, however, rallied in Hamilton's support. Many of the more moderate Tories stayed away, and the motion was only rejected by 152 votes to 117. The Reformers had rarely had a more favourable division; and they openly expressed their hope that the strength which they thus displayed in the lobby might increase their chances of future success.[1]

The representation of Edinburgh.

In 1824 the question of Scotch representation was again brought forward; but its management passed into the hands of a politician who has already been mentioned in this chapter, James Abercromby, the younger brother of Lord Abercromby. Evading the larger question, which Hamilton had raised, Abercromby fastened on the anomalous condition of a single Scotch borough. Edinburgh was the capital of Scotland; it comprised a hundred thousand inhabitants; its citizens were exceptionally distinguished for their education and their requirements. Its University had attracted the ablest staff which had ever been

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ix. pp. 611–642.

collected in any one educational centre. Every Scotchman was proud of the ancient city, which was inseparably identified with the history of its country. Every Englishman had heard of the picturesque town, whose situation, whose annals, whose society, and whose citizens offered so many points of interest to the tourist and the student. Yet the member for Edinburgh was elected by only thirty-three persons, the magistrates and Town Council of the borough. Out of these thirty-three persons nineteen nominated their own successors; the remaining fourteen were elected by the incorporated trades, amounting to about 700 persons. Thirty-three individuals, not necessarily possessing any property in the town, perhaps of no social standing and of no particular acquirements, monopolised the representation of the capital of Scotland. So little interest was, however, felt in the matter in 1824, that Abercromby could hardly collect a House to listen to his arguments for a reform in the representation of Edinburgh. His motion was rejected by 99 votes to 75. Discouraged by the defeat, he waited till 1826 before he renewed his motion. William Dundas, the member for the city, a cousin to Lord Melville, gravely told him that the success of his motion would involve a breach of the Treaty of Union. Dundas had some reason for using an exaggerated argument. Lord Melville was the patron of all Scotland; he had the patronage of all Scotland in his hands.[1] The Dundases naturally obtained some seasonable pickings from this arrangement, and William Dundas, Lord Clerk Register, Keeper of the Signet, and Register of the Sasines in Scotland, had not been forgotten Liberal members might laugh at the notion of Abercromby's success involving a breach of the Treaty of Union, but there was no question that it would have occasioned very serious loss to patrons like Melville. The House, however, rallied as usual in the defence of monopolists. Abercromby was beaten by 122 votes to 97,[2] and Dundas had the satisfaction of saving the privileges of his thirty-three constituents.

Up to the close of 1826, then, no practical progress had

[1] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 87. [2] *Hansard*, vol. xv. p. 190.

been made in any of the religious and political questions which were attracting the attention of liberal-minded men. The Church still enjoyed a monopoly in religion. A few isolated individuals still enjoyed a monopoly in politics. A man who was not a Churchman was theoretically incapable of exercising the rights of a citizen. The great body of the nation had practically no concern in the affairs of the Government. Every attempt at Reform, every argument for religious freedom, was met by the determined opposition of the Tory party; and enlightened statesmen, finding themselves always in a minority and continually excluded from office, despaired of obtaining the success of their own views or of defeating their determined opponents. Contemporary statesmen might, indeed, well despair. A long succession of reverses disheartens the best troops. Constant ill-success must equally deprive the most energetic politicians of all hope. Yet it is easy to see now that the legislation which the Parliament of 1820 had adopted was silently pointing to reforms, both in Church and in State. The Parliament of 1820 had destroyed monopolies in trade. It left to its successors the task of destroying monopolies in politics and religion.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLOSING YEARS OF GEORGE IV.

THE remarkable Administration, whose history has been related in the preceding chapters, comprised—from its first reconstruction under Liverpool—two distinct sections of the Tory party. On at least one great question, its members were free to answer one another. But while, during the reign of George III., the opinions of the old Tory party were predominant in the Cabinet, from the accession of George IV. another and more liberal section of the Tories was continually growing in influence. Arrangements which replaced Castlereagh with Canning, Sidmouth with Peel, Vansittart with Robinson, did not constitute a mere change of men; they involved a change of measures.

The differences in the Liverpool Administration.

The alterations which were thus made in the composition of the Cabinet only affected the Treasury bench in the House of Commons. In the House of Lords, the Administration was almost exclusively represented by the old Tories. There, at any rate, the Tories had the satisfaction of hearing their principles and their policy expounded by Eldon and Sidmouth. The measures which the members of the Cabinet urged in one House were resisted, and occasionally defeated, by their colleagues in the other. The members of the Cabinet in the House of Commons, for instance, were almost unanimously in favour of the emancipation of the Roman Catholics; the members of the Cabinet in the House of Lords were almost as unanimously opposed to it.

The marked difference between the views of the two sections of the Cabinet on the Roman Catholic question was extended

to other subjects. Every day that passed made Canning's foreign policy more objectionable to the Tories. All that Castlereagh had done Canning was undoing. The Tories, moreover, who distrusted Canning's foreign policy, disliked the free trade measures which Huskisson was advocating. Huskisson was assailing the principles which they had hitherto accepted as confidently as they had adhered to the articles of their creed or to the good old constitutional doctrine of Church and King. He had done worse. Like Canning, he had almost insensibly committed them to the policy which they disapproved. While the Cabinet had only agreed that something must be done with the corn laws, Huskisson had publicly announced his preference for free trade. The Tories were indignant at the announcement, and with the minister who had made it; and Liverpool, oppressed by the dissensions of his colleagues and the discontent of his supporters, had brooded over the vexations of the past and the anxieties of the future till body and brain had given way under the pressure.

The two sections of the Cabinet were sharply defined. The Tories placed their faith in Wellington; the new school trusted implicitly to Canning. The leading members of the Cabinet in the Lords shared the views of the Duke; the leading members of the Cabinet in the Commons supported the policy of Canning. The Tory members of the House of Commons, however, detested the doctrines of the front bench. They desired to rally round Peel and to throw over their nominal leader. And the recent election had added to the strength and consistency of their party. They had come back with the confidence of men whose policy has been approved by the constituencies. They, perhaps, naturally considered that a Tory majority in the House of Commons and a Tory majority in the House of Lords should logically be followed by the appointment of a Tory Cabinet; and they did not tolerate a "see-saw" Government,[1] which tried their patience by proposing to them novel measures opposed to their immediate interests and the traditions of their party.

The discontent of the Tories.

[1] Sir Thomas Lethbridge's expression (Colchester, vol. iii. p. 476).

The distrust which they felt of Canning was, moreover, increased by the circumstance that they disliked him personally. "The language of the Tory party," wrote Fremantle in 1824, "is universal and undisguised abuse of Canning."[1] They did not believe in his honesty; they did not believe in his principles; they branded him as a traitor.[2] The distrust which Canning thus excited in his own colleagues was fully shared by the king. George IV. had never forgiven his conduct on the queen's trial. He had been with difficulty persuaded to sanction his readmission to the Cabinet; and, though he had been compelled to yield, he had not given Canning his confidence on public questions. Disliked by the king, distrusted by his colleagues, unpopular with his party, it seemed unlikely that Canning would be either asked or able to form an Administration. But, on the other hand, it was difficult to understand how any ministry could hope to exist without his active assistance. In the House of Lords the Tories were indisputably strong; but in the House of Commons they had no representative of weight or ability. Peel, indeed, agreed with them on the Roman Catholic question, but he differed from them on every other subject of foreign, commercial, or domestic policy.[3] Robinson, Huskisson, and even Wynn, would have exerted all their weight and all their influence in opposition to a purely Tory ministry; and the Tories, who flattered themselves on their numerical strength, would have been cut to pieces by the debating power which would have been arrayed against them. On the one hand, then, Canning's unpopularity both with the king and his party made his appointment as Prime Minister doubtful; on the other, his pre-eminence in debate made it impracticable for any Administration to dispense with him. In this dilemma it was natural for keen politicians to suggest that some neutral politician, under whom both Canning and

Their distrust of Canning,

which is also felt by the king.

Canning's position.

[1] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 91.
[2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 499. Plumer Ward, vol. i. p. 347.
[3] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. pp. 300–301.

Wellington might serve, should be placed at the head of the ministry. Three peers, Wellesley, Harrowby, and Bathurst, and two commoners, Peel and Robinson, were all suggested as possible Prime Ministers.[1] A similar arrangement had been proposed eighteen years before on the retirement of the Duke of Portland. It had been defeated then by Canning's refusal to accept anything except the first place in the ministry. There was no probability that he would conform in 1827 to an arrangement which he had thought incompatible with his position in 1809; and it ought to have been foreseen that there was no mean between excluding him from the ministry and placing him at the head of it.

His illness.

At the time of Liverpool's seizure, however, Canning was lying seriously ill at Brighton. He was unable to attend the hasty meeting of his colleagues in London. He was so unwell that the intelligence of Liverpool's illness was only communicated to him through his wife. He was, however, well enough to see Peel on the morning of the 19th of February.[2] Peel and he both agreed that the proper course to take under the circumstances was to act as if they did not entirely despair of their chief's recovery; to go on with the ordinary business of the country in the usual way; and to take no immediate steps for disposing of Liverpool's office.[3] This decision had some obvious convenience. It postponed the necessity of deciding between the conflicting claims of Canning and Wellington; it suited the temper of the king, who always preferred deferring a difficulty to the morrow instead of grappling with it on the day; and it was a graceful act towards their old leader to contemplate the possibility of a recovery which, unfortunately, there was little ground for expecting.

The state of the public business.

This decision compelled the ministry to examine the condition of public business. The Government had promised to explain its views on the corn laws. Burdett had given notice of a motion for Catholic emancipation. The question of the corn laws would properly be raised

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 463. [2] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 597.
[3] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. iii. p. 301.

by Huskisson, the President of the Board of Trade. But Huskisson's policy had so offended the country squires, that Liverpool, before his illness, had been anxious to place the subject in other hands. Canning undertook to bring it forward as leader of the House, and on the 1st of March, though still far from well, he rose to explain the proposals of the Government. The ministry, he said, had decided to adopt a sliding scale which was calculated to equalise the price of corn. Every kind of grain was to be capable of importation at all times, but the duty paid on its import was to vary with its price. When wheat was at 60*s.* a quarter, it was to be imported on paying a 20*s.* duty. The duty was to increase when the price of wheat fell; it was to decrease when the price rose; and the increase and decrease in the duty was to be double the decrease and the increase in the price.[1] When grain was cheap, therefore, the agriculturist was to have the protection of high duties; when it was dear, the consumer was to have the advantage of low duties. The principle of the scheme had been suggested by Huskisson, its details had been approved by Liverpool, and adopted by the Cabinet.[2] Its acceptance by the party, however, seemed doubtful. "The great landowners had all got together; they were determined upon prohibition; no compromise would appease them. The Lords were more violent than the Commons, and they were all pledged to each other."[3] But, as Canning proceeded with his speech, the Opposition was to a great extent dissolved. The Tories did not like the bill of the ministry, but they were not agreed on any alternative to substitute for it. The debate was adjourned for a week, and the Tories, at the end of the week, were no nearer agreement than they had been at the beginning of it. Bankes

The corn laws.

[1] For every quarter of wheat, wheat being 60*s.* and under 61*s.* a quarter, a duty of 20*s.*; 61*s.* and under 62*s.*, 18*s.*; 62*s.* and under 63*s.*, 16*s.*; and so on till the price rose to 70*s.* or upwards, when the duty was to remain at 1*s.* For every quarter of wheat, wheat being 59*s.* and under 60*s.* a quarter, a duty of 22*s.*; 58*s.* and under 59*s.*, 24*s.*; and so on.

[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. pp. 428, 430.

[3] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. iii. p. 305.

suggested that the 20*s.* duty should be paid when wheat was 64*s.* a quarter. But this proposal to raise the price by 4*s.* was beaten by 229 votes to 160.[1] Whitmore, representing the other side of the question, suggested that the 20*s.* duty should be payable when wheat was 50*s.* a quarter; but was beaten by 335 votes to 50.[2] These contradictory amendments satisfied the great mass of the people that the ministry had suggested a reasonable compromise; and, though the other details of the proposal were keenly debated, Canning's resolutions, and the bill which was founded on them, passed the House of Commons without any material alteration.

Roman Catholic emancipation.

Long before the debates on the corn laws had been concluded, Burdett brought forward his motion on the Catholic question. Both parties felt that, in the unsettled state of the ministry, unusual importance attached to the debate. Both of them made the utmost exertions to ensure success. Liverpool, before his fatal illness, had regretted that the House of Commons should have been asked to consider the claims of the Catholics and the position of the corn laws within the same week. He feared that the country gentlemen, while they were speaking and voting about the Catholics, would be thinking about corn.[3] He could not have foreseen that, while they were nominally voting on Burdett's motion, they would in reality be endeavouring to influence the choice of his successor. Yet it required no great perspicacity to see that the marked victory of either party might materially influence the king's choice. Peel himself went down to the House expecting to be beaten, and resolved to resign office immediately after his defeat.[4] The debate lasted for two nights. During the first, nothing particular occurred. The discussion was carried on "chiefly by Irish members, and adjourned."[5] Early on the second night the debate was enlivened by a speech from Copley. Copley's career had already been remarkable. He was the son of the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xvi. p. 1082. [2] Ibid., p. 1122.
[3] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 453. [4] *Ann. Reg.*, Hist., 1827, p. 55, note.
[5] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 465.

great American artist, whose works are still admired. Early in his life he had embraced opinions of an unusually liberal character, and he had, in consequence, been retained in 1817 to defend Watson on the charge of high treason. In the opinion of the ministers, Watson partly owed his acquittal to the abilities of his advocate; and Castlereagh held out considerable inducements to the rising young lawyer to tempt him to enlist in the Tory ranks.

Copley was easily persuaded to enter the House of Commons as member for a Government borough; almost immediately afterwards he was made Solicitor-General. He distinguished himself in this capacity by his vigorous and successful advocacy, both in Parliament and at the Bar, of the repressive measures of the Cabinet; he was rewarded in 1823 by promotion to the Attorney-Generalship; and, on Lord Gifford's death in 1826, he was almost compelled to accept the Mastership of the Rolls.[1] Early on the second night of the debate on Burdett's motion Copley delivered a vigorous and successful speech against it. The speech was divisible into two parts. In the earlier part he entered into an elaborate historical argument to justify the penal laws; in the last part he endeavoured to show that every statesman, from Pitt to Canning, who had desired emancipation, had been in favour of coupling the reform with some securities; and that Canning could not consistently support a motion which contemplated no securities whatever.

A whisper ran round the House while Copley was speaking that he was only reproducing the sentiments which had just been published in a letter addressed to Canning by one Phillpotts, a richly beneficed clergyman, who had already attained distinction in polemical warfare, and who was destined to acquire greater reputation afterwards. Canning had not deigned to answer Phillpotts' pamphlet. But, when Copley repeated Phillpotts' arguments in the House, he persuaded himself that the pamphlet had been written at Copley's dictation.[2] Irritated at what he supposed to be the treachery of a

[1] Campbell's *Chancellors*, vol. viii. [2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 466.

former colleague, and in too weak health to suppress his irritation, he devoted his reply to a merciless attack on the Master of the Rolls. Oratorically his speech was a success, politically it was a failure. It raised a barrier between Copley and Canning; it affronted some of Copley's friends; and it was thought to have cost the Roman Catholics some votes. Whether this were the cause or not, the Protestants achieved an unexpected victory. At four o'clock in the morning the House divided, and the friends of the Roman Catholics were found to be in a minority of four. Including tellers and pairs, 584 members had taken part in the division.[1]

The defeat of the Roman Catholics.

The spirits of the Protestant party were raised by this success. The general election had given them a majority, and one of the obstacles to the formation of a purely Protestant Administration was removed. Canning had wound up his speech by the declaration, "If this resolution be negatived, if the House of Commons should decide that the consideration of the state of Ireland is not worthy to be entered upon, then is the House of Commons changed indeed; and it would be more easy to imagine than it would be safe for me to express the consequence that may ensue from such a change." This emphatic declaration imparted additional significance to the division; and those with whom the wish was perhaps father to the thought confidently expected that Canning would at once resign.[2] A few Peers, strong in their anti-Catholic opinions, met together to agree upon a common course of action, and to assure the king of their support in the event of his choosing a Protestant Administration;[3] and Lethbridge gave notice of an address for the appointment of a ministry which would be unanimous in a plan of Government, and act upon some united principle.

[1] For the debate see *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvi. pp. 825–1013. For Copley's speech, ibid., p. 905. For Canning's reply, ibid., p. 993. For division, ibid., p. 1009.

[2] Greville, vol. i. p. 91.

[3] The history of this intrigue, of which the Duke of Newcastle was the mouthpiece, will be found related in Colchester, vol. iii. pp. 466–476.

Canning, however, did not resign. His exertions in the great debate brought back a return of his former illness, and he was again compelled to rest in his own house and to confess himself "disabled at present from discharging his official duties."[1] He was not able to attend the House of Commons till the 26th of March; and even then he was evidently suffering from the effects of his severe illness.

Twelve days before his partial recovery, the king had moved from Brighton to Windsor. Liverpool's health was thought to be slightly improving; and no definite steps were taken to solve the difficulty which the Prime Minister's seizure had created. Every day, however, produced a new rumour; and Peel, Bathurst, Canning, and Wellington were all successively mentioned as Liverpool's successors. The king wavered and doubted; blustered to his attendants, supplicated his ministers in turn to support him; assured Newcastle that he was a Protestant heart and soul; but settled nothing.[2] At length, on the 28th of March, Canning had an interview with him. He found the king as firmly opposed as ever to any concession to the Roman Catholics, and he accordingly advised him to make the Government "conformable" to his own opinions.[3] It was easy for Canning to offer such advice. It was impossible for the king to follow it. The rank and file of the Tory party, with Newcastle at their head, might talk of the propriety of forming a Protestant Administration; but the leading members of the party fully recognised the impossibility of doing so. The best hope for such a ministry would have been the promotion of Wellington to the Treasury; and the Duke declared that he would "have been worse than mad" if he had contemplated such an eventuality. Peel, on his part, declined even to be a party to the attempt.[4] Canning's recommendation led to a delay of twelve days; but, at the

Canning commanded to form a ministry.

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 467.
[2] Greville, vol. i. p. 92. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 472.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. xvii. p. 430.
[4] Ibid., p. 461; and Eldon, vol. ii. p. 591. Cf. *George Canning and his Times*, pp. 583, 589.

end of the twelve days, the king was again compelled to send for him, and direct him to form a Government on the same principle as that on which Liverpool's Cabinet had been constructed.

Canning received the king's commands on the 10th of April. A conversation, a fortnight before, had prepared him for Peel's resignation. Peel frankly told him that, with his views on the Roman Catholic question, he could not remain in office if Canning were placed at the head of the ministry. The intimation was made privately; it was made to Canning alone; and, unless the words of an honest man are untrustworthy, the unfortunate difference on the Catholic question was the sole cause of Peel's withdrawal from the ministry.[1] Canning, after he had received the king's commands to form a ministry, endeavoured to shake Peel's resolution. He failed; and the two men parted—the one to die without making any further effort for the Catholics, the other to carry the question which at the moment was driving him from office. Canning, after his interview with Peel, applied to the remainder of his old colleagues. There were two of them whose answers, for different reasons, were important. Eldon was the champion of the Protestant party in the House of Lords; his example was certain to influence a good many of the Peers; and Eldon at once resigned his Chancellorship. He had an excuse for his resignation which most of his colleagues could not plead. He was growing old: the labours of his office were becoming irksome to him; and he had frequently threatened to resign. Ever given to doubt, his habits of indecision increased with his years. The business of his court fell into serious arrears; and Eldon himself became the subject of a bitter attack in the House of Commons. Too old to learn the necessity for more haste in future, too susceptible to bear with indifference the charges of his oppo-

Peel resigns.

His resignation is followed by that of Eldon,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xvii. p. 407. Lord Dalling endeavours to argue that the resignation was on personal grounds. His argument is unfair to Peel's character. See Memoir, p. 41. Cf. *George Canning and his Times*, p. 590.

nents, the closing years of his Chancellorship brought him much unhappiness; and his resignation, on Liverpool's seizure, was natural.[1]

and of the Duke of Wellington,

Canning probably expected Eldon's resignation. But there was another peer, of even greater influence and higher rank than Eldon, whose answer he waited with more anxiety. Immediately after his return from the king he wrote to Wellington to say that the king had charged him with the duty of reconstructing the ministry; that both his duty to his Majesty and his own wish made him desire to adhere to the principles on which Liverpool's Government had acted; and that the accomplishment of this arrangement would essentially depend upon the Duke's continuing a member of the Cabinet. The Duke, before answering Canning's "obliging proposition," put the plain question, "Who is to be Prime Minister?" Canning replied that in this, as in other cases, the individual entrusted with the formation of a ministry would be placed at the head of it. The Duke considered that such an arrangement must eventually lead to the abandonment of the principles on which Liverpool's Government had acted, and at once tendered his resignation, both of his situation in the ministry and of the command of the army. Such a letter must have prepared Canning for the future that was before him. The Duke's resignation was followed by the resignations of Bathurst, Melville, Westmorland, and Bexley. Bathurst resigned because Wellington had retired; Melville because Bathurst had left office. Westmorland's resignation was due to the same cause; Bexley's to a mistaken notion that the new ministry was to be pledged to a measure of Roman Catholic relief. Almost at the same moment Canning found himself deserted by all of his colleagues except four. Harrowby, Charles Wynn, Huskisson, and Robinson formed the rump which adhered to him.

and of four other ministers.

[1] Dickens has inserted in his attack on the Court of Chancery, in *Bleak House*, an admirable description of the old Chancellor. Lord Eldon's kindly nature was never portrayed more happily or more accurately.—*Bleak House*, ch. iii.

The retiring ministers probably concluded that their resignations had made Canning's task impracticable. "Here, sire," said Canning himself to the king, "is that which disables me from executing the orders I have received from you. It is now open to your Majesty to adopt a new course; but it becomes my duty fairly to state that, if I am to go on in the position where you have been pleased to place me, my writ must be moved for to-day." The king assented to this arrangement. A few hours afterwards Wynn moved for a new writ for the borough of Newport, "in consequence of the Right Honourable George Canning having accepted the office of the First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury;" and the House adjourned for the Easter holidays.[1] The adjournment gave Canning a respite of three weeks for the completion of his arrangements. He had been deserted by the great majority of his colleagues, and it was almost indispensable for him to obtain aid elsewhere. It was natural, under such circumstances, that he should look for support from the Whigs. The Whigs agreed with him on the Catholic question; they had warmly supported his recent foreign policy; they had made more than one attempt to detach him from the Tory ranks; and they had privately conveyed to him an assurance of their support in the event of his desertion by the extreme Tories.[2] The whole of the Whig party, indeed, were by no means unanimous in their desire to support the new minister. Lansdowne, who twenty years before had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Talents Administration, Holland, Tierney, and Brougham were in favour of coalition. Grey, from a marked distrust of Canning, and Althorp, who was slowly rising into eminence, were opposed to it. Brougham declared at the outset that he would not take office, and actually refused the Chief

Canning's junction with the Whigs.

[1] An account of these transactions will be found in *Hansard*, vol. xvii. pp. 494–498; the order in which the resignations were received, in ibid., p. 522; and Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. pp. 16–26. Cf. Greville, vol. i. p. 92; Eldon, vol. ii. p. 591; Colchester, vol. iii. p. 482.

[2] The history of this intrigue is given, on unexceptionable authority, in Greville, vol. iii. p. 137.

Barony of the Exchequer, which Canning at once offered him.[1] He succeeded, however, in obtaining a silk gown, which the miserable jealousy of George IV. had previously denied him; and, in return for this honour, steadily promoted the success of the coalition. The Whigs undertook, at a great meeting at Brooks's, to support the Government without office; but an understanding was arrived at, that room in the ministry should be found for them before the conclusion of the session.[2]

The promise of co-operation from the Whigs enabled Canning to obey the king's commands and to form an Administration. But it was no easy matter to fill up the vacancies which his colleagues' resignations had created. Seven cabinet ministers had retired from office, and their retirement was soon followed by the resignation of Wallace, the Master of the Mint; Wetherell, the Attorney-General; and Beckett, the Judge-Advocate. The Easter recess, however, gave Canning time for the completion of his plans, and before the conclusion of it he was able to fill all the chief situations in the ministry. But the appointments which he was able to make were far from satisfactory. Robinson, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer since 1823, had for some months past been anxious to escape from the fatigue and anxiety of the House of Commons. Canning's promotion afforded him an opportunity for doing so; he became Lord Goderich, accepted the seals of the Colonial Office, and undertook to lead the House of Lords. Sturges Bourne, who during a long Parliamentary career had filled many offices, who had enjoyed a very intimate friendship with Canning, and who had once been Under Secretary in the department, accepted the seals of the Home Office in place of Peel. The Duke of Portland, married to Mrs. Canning's sister, became Privy Seal in the

His ministry.

[1] Brougham told Grey that he refused it because he could not take it without leaving "my friends in the House of Commons exposed to the leaders of different parties." (See his Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 489.) He told his friends that he refused it because "it would have amounted to shelving."—Campbell's *Chancellors*, vol. viii. p. 350.

[2] Le Marchant's *Spencer*, p. 216.

room of Lord Westmorland; and Lord Dudley, who had gained a brilliant reputation in the House of Commons, and who had since inherited his father's peerage, succeeded Canning at the Foreign Office.[1] Scarlett, an advocate of extraordinary power, replaced Wetherell as Attorney-General. Lord Anglesey, a brilliant officer, who had lost a leg at Waterloo, accepted the Ordnance Office, which the Duke of Wellington's retirement vacated; and Bexley consented to withdraw the resignation which he had already tendered. These appointments nominally disposed of the majority of the vacancies in the ministry. But they were not regarded with much favour by the outside public. It was generally believed that many of them were provisional, and they were disliked because they were regarded as only temporary.

There were, however, four other offices in the Government besides those which have been enumerated. Wellington had retired from the command of the army, Melville from the Admiralty, Eldon from the woolsack; Robinson's promotion to the Colonial Office and the Peerage had vacated the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Three months before, after the death of the Duke of York, the king had desired to become his own commander-in-chief. After Wellington's resignation George IV. reverted to this proposal, and expressed a wish to assume the command of his own army.[2] It was not so easy for Canning in April as for Liverpool in January to dissuade him from doing so. The utmost that Canning could do was to prevail upon him to leave the office vacant for the present.[3] Though the minister, however, recoiled from the extraordinary project of the king commanding his own

[1] The wits of the day declared that Lord Dudley's appointment was peculiarly appropriate. "Ses affaires lui ont été toujours étrangères." (Colchester, vol. iii. p. 538.) Lord Dudley was abstracted and absent in society, and had the habit of muttering to himself while chinking his sovereigns.—Palmerston, vol. i. p. 199. Lord Dudley had been offered the Under Secretaryship of the Foreign Office some years before. (Ward's Correspondence with the Bishop of Llandaff, p. 369.)

[2] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 645.

[3] He made a fresh but vain effort to induce the Duke to resume it in May. (Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 35.)

army, he startled the public by reviving the office of Lord High Admiral, and by appointing to it the king's next brother. The appointment undoubtedly did a good deal to facilitate Canning's labours. His position was strengthened by the accession of the Duke of Clarence, while the novelty of the arrangement and the boldness of the innovation concealed the objections to the appointment.

The Duke of Clarence made Lord High Admiral.

Canning desired to confer the Chancellorship of the Exchequer on the Secretary at War, Lord Palmerston; and Palmerston at once accepted Canning's offer. Eighteen years before the same offer had been made to him. He had at that time declined it, on the ground that he was too young for the situation; and he had since discharged with exemplary fidelity the duties of Secretary-at-War. He seemed to have attained in 1827 the distinction which he might certainly have acquired in 1809. But a singular circumstance prevented his promotion. The king, accustomed to the easy ways of Vansittart and Robinson, objected to Palmerston's robust temperament. Canning found it necessary to break his promise to his subordinate and to unite the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Finance Minister in his own person. He apparently, however, felt bitterly his inability to redeem his pledge to his colleague. By the king's desire he offered him the Governorship of Jamaica; but Palmerston very naturally replied that he preferred England and the War Office to Jamaica and the negroes. He subsequently offered him the Governor-Generalship of India; but Palmerston's happy disposition was satisfied with his situation at home. He would have cheerfully undertaken the difficult duties of Finance Minister; he cheerfully remained in his old situation at the War Office, and was promoted, for his constancy and worth, to a seat in the Cabinet.[1]

Palmerston.

[1] There is a good story, which is worth preserving, singularly illustrative of Palmerston's dexterity. During his long stay at the War Office he instituted a communication between his own room and the Registry. A basket, always

The same difficulty which deprived Canning of Palmerston's services in the Treasury also occurred in filling up the Chancellorship. The king had assured the Primate and the Bishop of London that he was determined on having a Protestant Chancellor, a Protestant Lord Lieutenant, and a Protestant Chief Secretary of Ireland.[1] After such a statement the qualifications of one man for the Chancellorship could not be overlooked. By his great speech against the Roman Catholics in February, Copley had made himself the champion of the Protestant cause. It is true that Copley's declamation had led to an open rupture between Canning and himself. He was probably, therefore, the last person whom Canning would have willingly selected for the Chancellorship. Statesmen, however, who undertake to form an Administration when they are deserted by all their colleagues, and are coldly supported by their sovereign, cannot expect to dictate their own terms. Copley, to the disgust of his friends who had known him as a Liberal, became Chancellor and Lord Lyndhurst, and Leach succeeded him as Master of the Rolls.

Copley made Chancellor.

George IV. had forced a Protestant Chancellor on his minister. He had pledged himself to insist on the appointment of a Protestant Lord Lieutenant and a Protestant Chief Secretary for Ireland. He found, however, that in this respect he had some one besides Canning to deal with. Lansdowne declined to have anything to do with the new ministry unless he was allowed to remodel

William Lamb made Irish Secretary.

at his side, could be drawn at any moment on a given signal into the Registry, and returned to him in the way in which it came. Whenever a visitor called on Palmerston, he was always desired to send in his name. The name was at once placed in the basket, whisked into the Registry, and returned with all the papers relating to the visitor's case. When Palmerston had listened to his applicant's preliminary statement, he used to interrupt him by saying, "Dear me! It's very remarkable, but I have your case actually before me now," and, diving his hand into the basket, produced the papers. The delighted applicant departed with the conviction that his own grievances had been engaging the minister's attention all the morning. Palmerston's account of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer negotiations will be found in the Appendix to Bulwer's Life, vol. i. p. 374.

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 486.

the Irish government as he chose. Lansdowne and Canning together were too strong for the king, and George IV. found it necessary to break his inconsiderate promise to the Primate. Instead of Wellesley retiring to make room for a Protestant Viceroy, Goulburn was succeeded by a Catholic Chief Secretary.[1] William Lamb, who was selected for the office, was the second son of the first Lord Melbourne. Born in 1779, he had lived for the first six-and-twenty years of his life with only the prospects of a second son before him. The death of his elder brother in 1805 made him heir-apparent to his father's title, and almost immediately led to his introduction into Parliament. "An idler of fashion," the favourite of society, he completed the forty-eighth year of his age and the twenty-second of his Parliamentary career without evincing any of the qualifications which ultimately made him Prime Minister of England.[2] His friends thought him lazy in business and inefficient in debate; and they only partially forgave him for supporting the Six Acts in 1819, and for the moderation of his political conduct. His more intimate acquaintances were, however, aware that his easy temperament concealed qualities which would have made any one distinguished. A man of the world, who had received a fashionable education at Eton and at Cambridge, he was an excellent scholar, full of information on every subject, and endowed with a passionate love of literature, which no cares or labours could suppress.[3]

The king submitted to Lamb's selection the more readily because the qualities which made him popular in society commended him to his Majesty. Canning, however, was unable to secure another appointment which he desired to make. He wished to reward the brilliant services of Plunket with the Irish Chancellorship and a peerage. The peerage was at once

[1] The words Catholic and Protestant throughout this chapter are, of course, used not in their strict sense, but in the sense applied to them at the time. See, for the statement in the text as to Lord Lansdowne, Greville, vol. i. p. 96; and cf. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 489.

[2] See Mr. McCullagh Torrens' *Memoir*, vol. i. pp. 22–196.

[3] Brougham, vol. iii. p. 409. Greville, vol. iii. p. 130. Russell's *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 140.

conferred upon the great orator; but the king refused to accept Lord Manners' resignation of the Irish Chancellorship. Canning ought to have declined to accept the king's decision. Every argument which could be urged in favour of his own acceptance of the Treasury pointed to the promotion of Plunket to the Irish Chancellorship. Men, however, are apt to regard their own claims and those of their friends from different standpoints, and Canning gave way. Foiled in his original purpose, he endeavoured to soothe his friend's disappointment by offering him the Mastership of the Rolls, which Copley had just vacated. The English Bar, however, protested against the appointment of an Irish barrister to a post which had always been regarded as an exclusive prize for English barristers, and Plunket had to refuse the offer. A vacancy was ultimately made for him by the retirement of the Chief Justice of the Irish Court of Common Pleas, and Plunket was thus provided with a suitable office. But he felt bitterly the disappointment which he had experienced, and he threw the responsibility of his rejection on the Prime Minister.[1]

Plunket made Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and a Peer.

The various appointments which have been thus related were completed before the conclusion of the Easter recess. But it was rumoured that many of them—Sturges Bourne's and Dudley's, for example—were only provisional, and that some of the minor offices of the Administration—the Mastership of the Mint, the Surveyorship of Woods and Forests, and the office of Judge-Advocate-General—were still undisposed of. Extreme Tories, irritated at Canning's unexpected success in forming a Government, affected to regard these vacancies as a proof of the provisional nature of the Administration, and a provisional ministry as wholly undeserving of support. Tories, indeed, spoilt by a continuous tenure of place, must have been peculiarly exasperated at the appearance of the House of Commons. There, sitting above Canning, the recent leader

The irritation of the Tories.

[1] The history of this will be found in Mr. McCullagh Torrens' *Life of Lord Melbourne*, vol. i. p. 230.

of the Tory party, was Brougham, only recently the most formidable member of the Opposition. The Tories forgot that the change was due to the secession of their own leaders; and that the reasons which had induced them to cross the House themselves justified the Whigs in imitating their example. They saw the inconsistency of Canning's alliance with the Whigs; they were not cool enough to reflect that it was caused by their own defection, and they assailed the minister night after night with the most violent invective.

The House of Commons met on Tuesday, the 1st, the House of Lords on Wednesday, the 2nd of May. The first sittings in both Houses were entirely occupied with the explanations which ministers and ex-ministers thought it necessary to offer. The debates were warm; but they were cool compared with those which followed them. On the 3rd of May, General Gascoyne, the member for Liverpool, was rising to make a speech on the condition of the shipping interest, when he was interrupted by George Dawson, the member for Londonderry. Dawson had married Peel's sister; he had been Peel's under secretary at the Home Office. He rose to ask whether the Mint, the Woods and Forests, and the office of Judge-Advocate-General had been filled up. Canning, amidst great cheers and laughter, answered "Yes," but he pronounced the word "in such a tone of mingled scorn, anger, and grief, that it seemed as if the heart of him who uttered it were breaking with vexation and disappointment."[1] Dawson had little pity for the vexation and disappointment of his former leader. He immediately followed up his question by moving that copies of the commissions of the Master of the Mint and of the Judge-Advocate should be laid before the House. "It had been stated publicly," he said, "that the places were to be filled up by those honourable members who now supported the Government, but who had for so long a time been opposed to its measures." Brougham, seconding Dawson's motion, defended himself and Canning, and ridiculed the Opposition. Brougham's

The first proceedings in Parliament.

[1] Lord Russell's *Recollections*, p. 54. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. p. 505

patronage was probably almost as distasteful to the minister as Dawson's uncompromising attack. Canning, however, had the courage to express his joy that "the standard of Opposition" was at length raised, and to declare that such an act was "worth a thousand professions of qualified neutrality."[1] Qualified neutrality was the last boon which was to be extended to his Government. On the next evening, on going into Committee of Supply, Lethbridge declared that no confidence could be felt in the Ministry; and, on the following Monday, the fiery quarrel blazed up anew on an intimation from Fitzgerald, the member for Kerry, that he intended to withdraw a notice which he had given for the consideration of the claims of the Roman Catholics. It was evident, the Tories retorted, that "the Roman Catholics had been sacrificed to the desire of office."[2] For a moment the hot dispute subsided. On the Friday, Bourne took his seat as Home Secretary. He was at once asked whether he held the office provisionally, and, of course, replied that he held it during his Majesty's pleasure. The plain answer was made the pretext for fresh debate. Lethbridge renewed the attack on the coalition, and Canning repelled it with unusual warmth.[3]

The attack upon Canning in the Lords.

The opposition to the ministry was even fiercer in the House of Lords. Lord Londonderry, who had made a reputation as Sir Charles Stewart, who had an implicit belief in the wisdom of his brother's policy and in his own ability, and who had just resigned a situation in the Bedchamber, vehemently attacked Canning's conduct of the Foreign Office, and pointedly denounced Dudley as a provisional minister. A day or two afterwards another uncompromising Tory, Newcastle, had the hardihood to call Canning "the most profligate minister that had ever been placed in power."[4] The expression accurately illustrated the temper of the Peers. Their hostility was the more formidable because

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. p. 540.
[2] Ibid., pp. 578, 580.
[3] Ibid., p. 743.
[4] Ibid., p. 707. Lord Colchester says the expression was, "a profligate minister and an unprincipled man."—Colchester, vol. iii. p. 499.

the new ministry was far weaker in the House of Lords than in the House of Commons. In the Lower House, Canning, supported by Brougham and backed by the Whigs, could afford to despise the barking of the Tory pack.[1] In the Upper House, the chief spokesmen of the ministry, only lately raised to the Peerage, found themselves assailed by an Opposition powerful both for its ability and its numbers. In the House of Commons, too, the Whigs as a body imitated the example of Brougham and supported the ministry or abstained from opposing it. In the House of Lords, Grey, the greatest of the Whigs, separated himself from his friends and joined with the Tories in denouncing the coalition, and in attacking the character of the new minister. Canning had borne the attacks of his former associates with comparative composure; he sank under the calm and telling eloquence of Grey. He even contemplated—so it was said at the time—his own elevation to the Peerage, in order that he might have the opportunity of replying to his assailant.[2]

The fierce attacks which were thus made on the provisional nature of the new Government induced the Whigs to reconsider their original determination and to openly join it. Lansdowne entered the Cabinet without office; Tierney accepted the Mint; and some minor situations in the Administration were conferred on other members of the Whig party. No one was thoroughly satisfied with these arrangements. Canning wished Lansdowne to receive the seals of the Home Office; Lansdowne declined to do so till the Irish Government was remodelled; and Tierney declared that the coach must be all unpacked and repacked again.[3] For the moment, however, the Administration acquired completeness from these appointments, and was able, in consequence, to escape from the taunts of its opponents, and to address itself to the business of the session. The

The Whigs join the ministry.

[1] "Blanche, Tray, and Sweetheart all barking at him."—Russell's *Recollections*, p. 52.

[2] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. p. 720. Brougham, vol. ii. p. 481.

[3] Greville, vol. i. p. 96. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 502.

session had hitherto been barren of results. No great measure had passed through both Houses of Parliament; but one measure of importance—the Corn Bill—had passed through all its stages in the House of Commons. The Peers had already anticipated its reception in their own House by appointing a committee to consider the prices at which corn should be imported into this country. The Act of 1815 had allowed the importation of corn when the price of wheat stood at 80*s.* a quarter. The Act of 1822 had contemplated the importation of corn when the price of wheat rose to 70*s.* a quarter. The bill of 1827 permitted the importation of corn at a 20*s.* duty when the price stood at 60*s.* a quarter. The agriculturists, however, were unanimous in considering that 60*s.* was not a remunerative price; and that the British farmer could not afford to grow grain if he were not assured some further protection.

The Corn Bill.

Such were the views of the agriculturists when the Corn Bill reached the House of Lords. The bill had been prepared by the late Government, and Wellington had been a member of the Cabinet which had approved its introduction. Wellington, however, had never liked its provisions; and on the 24th of May he wrote to Huskisson and privately suggested an amendment in it. The Duke desired to prevent corn being taken out of bond until the corn previously placed in bond had been entered for consumption, or until the price of wheat rose to 70*s.* a quarter. Huskisson replied that the provision was inadmissible, because it would give any "one proprietor of foreign corn in any port power to lay a veto upon the sale of all corn warehoused subsequent to his in that port until the price reached 70*s.*" Nothing could be clearer than this opinion. Unfortunately Huskisson went on to suggest another alternative. "Had your proposal been that no corn, after the passing of the present bill, should be allowed to be entered for home consumption till the average price had reached 66*s.*, and that thenceforward all corn so bonded, or thereafter imported, should come under the regulations of the bill, individually I should not object to such a proviso. But

Wellington's amendment.

I am afraid that even this amendment would prove fatal to the bill in our House." The Duke probably thought that any amendment on which he and Huskisson were agreed was certain of acceptance in the House of Commons. He at any rate decided on proposing an amendment in the sense which he attached to Huskisson's suggestion. He proposed that "foreign corn in bond should not be taken out of bond until the average price of corn should have reached 66*s*." Goderich at once said that the success of the amendment would be fatal to the bill. The Duke startled him, in reply, by showing him Huskisson's letter. The House divided. Some of the members of the Household voted against the Government, and the Duke's amendment was carried by a majority of 4 votes.[1]

The defeat was as embarrassing as it was unexpected. No one was more surprised by it than Huskisson. He had kept no copy of his letter to the Duke, and he was at a loss to conceive what he could have written which had justified the Duke's language. The Duke sent him a copy of his letter, and he was then for the first time aware of the careless terms in which it had been worded. He had intended to mean, and his words perhaps strictly did mean, that the provisions of the bill should be suspended till the average price of wheat had reached 66*s*.; but that, when once this price had been attained, "thenceforward," as his letter put it, the bill should come into operation. But, whatever was his meaning, his words were obviously capable of misinterpretation. Wellington honestly attached to them the sense which he embodied in his own amendment; Goderich failed to comprehend them; and Huskisson himself admitted that the mistake had arisen in a pure misunderstanding. The mistake, however, proved fatal to the measure. The ministers, indeed, endeavoured to correct it on the report; but they were beaten by a still larger majority. Wellington's amendment was reaffirmed by 133 votes to 122.[2]

[1] 78 votes to 74.—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. p. 1098.

[2] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. p. 1238. The correspondence between the Duke and Huskisson will be found in ibid., pp. 1326, 1386; and *Ann. Reg.*, 1827, Hist., p. 148.

Ministers had no one but themselves to thank for this defeat. It was due to Huskisson's carelessness and their own mismanagement. They ought never to have allowed either the Duke or any other peer to make any amendment in the bill whatever. The Corn Bill was a money bill, and the House of Lords was violating the privileges of the House of Commons in introducing any material amendment into a money bill. No one on the Government benches, however, seems to have seen the obvious point.[1] The Corn Bill was consequently lost, and the Government brought to the verge of ruin, through an amendment which ought never to have been allowed. The conduct of the Government after its defeat was almost as unwise as the proceedings which had led to it. The Corn Bill was dropped; a temporary measure was introduced and passed releasing corn in bond; and Canning undertook to reintroduce the bill which had been lost at the commencement of the following session. Instead, however, of submitting with dignity to the decision of the Lords, he was hurried into an attack upon the Peers. "I can conceive," he said, "no species of faction more inexcusable, more blamable, or more wicked than that which would make a subject touching the vital interests and involving the prosperity of the whole community a ground for exciting party feelings or exasperating political animosities." But, having laid down this rule, he wound up the debate by declaring that "the Duke of Wellington had been made an instrument in the hands of others on this occasion." Canning's language was severely criticised in the House of Lords; and Sir Joseph Yorke, Lord Hardwicke's brother, meeting him in Westminster Hall, told him that he would lose his place if he did not keep his temper.[2]

The angry feelings which Canning's taunt excited might possibly have been assuaged if the peers had known that the minister whom they had exasperated had made his last

[1] Lord Colchester saw it clearly enough. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 513.

[2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 516. For Canning's remarks see *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. pp. 1308, 1338. It is singular that the criticisms of the Peers on Canning's language are not reported in *Hansard*. They are given in the *Ann. Reg.*, 1827, Hist., p. 160; and are referred to in Colchester, *supra*.

important speech in the House of Commons. On the 2nd of July, ten days after it was made, Parliament was prorogued. Canning had been ill at the beginning of the session. The anxiety, the irritation, and the fatigue which he had undergone during the continuance of it had told on his constitution. He was too unwell to attend a Council held towards the end of July, at which Lansdowne was at last entrusted with the seals of the Home Office, and Lord Carlisle with the Privy Seal.[1] He accepted an invitation to the Duke of Devonshire's, at Chiswick, where it was hoped that quiet and good air might restore him to health. But he never recovered from the illness which was gradually destroying him. On the last Monday in July he told the king that "he did not know what was the matter with him, but that he was ill all over." On the following Wednesday his friends were alarmed to hear that his life was in danger. On Sunday, the 5th of August, the danger was announced to the public. The lumbago from which he was suffering had unfortunately proved only one symptom of the severe chill which he must have taken. Internal inflammation supervened. The unfortunate statesman suffered severe agony; his possible recovery became more and more doubtful; and at last, on the 8th of August, in the house in which Fox had died twenty years before, Canning passed away.

The death of Canning.

The news of Canning's death came like a thunderclap on the startled nation. Fifteen years had passed since a Prime Minister had died in England; and the catastrophe which had produced the death of Perceval had hardly created so great a sensation as the death of Canning. All that was liberal in the nation, all that was liberal in Europe, seemed dependent on the life of the great orator who was lying dead at Chiswick; and both intolerance at home as well as autocracy abroad had apparently been relieved by his death from their chief opponent. The failure of his short Administration in no way affected this conclusion. His shortcomings were uniformly ascribed to the pertinacity of an Opposition by which it was thought he had been done to death. The indiscretions which had made his

[1] Greville, vol. i. p. 102.

words distasteful to his own colleagues were regarded as his chief distinction by the nation. The eloquent language in which, as will be related in another chapter, he had called a new world into existence, or defied the Spanish army to cross the Portuguese frontier, had breathed new life into the struggling cause of Liberalism in Europe. An entire nation hastened to do honour to the departed statesman. His friends desired that his funeral in Westminster Abbey should be attended by his near relations and his colleagues alone. But it proved impossible to carry out their wish. Princes, peers, public bodies, private individuals, men of all ranks and of all opinions, begged permission to pay their last tribute of respect to the statesman on whose periods they had hung or on whose daring they had relied. The streets through which the procession passed to the Abbey were thronged by a vast crowd, which a heavy fall of rain failed to disperse; and, amidst the lamentations of a nation, the remains of the great orator were quietly lowered to their last resting-place among the statesmen whom England numbers in the long category of her worthies.

The formation of Lord Goderich's ministry.

Two days before his death Canning's colleagues met together to discuss their own procedure. They decided to stand by one another. Lansdowne was deputed to go to Windsor and announce the minister's death to the king. The king sent for Goderich and Sturges Bourne, the most intimate of Canning's friends, and desired Goderich to form a ministry. The task was easily completed. Lansdowne and the Whigs stood by the new minister. Wellington was induced to resume the command of the army. Goderich succeeded to Canning's office as First Lord of the Treasury. Huskisson replaced Goderich in the Colonial Office, and was entrusted with the lead of the House of Commons; and Charles Grant, who had been Vice-President of the Board, was promoted to the Presidency of the Board of Trade in succession to Huskisson. One office alone occasioned the new minister some embarrassment. Goderich desired to complete the arrangement which Canning had contemplated, and to secure Palmerston as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Immediately

after his own appointment he offered Palmerston the office. But Goderich proved as incapable as Canning of redeeming the pledge which he thus gave. The king, intent on building palaces in London and on making fresh improvements at Windsor, was anxious to secure a friend of his own at the Exchequer.[1] The "fittest man in England for the office," according to the king's estimation of fitness, was Herries. Herries had been private secretary years before to Vansittart; he had subsequently acted as private secretary to Perceval. He had been rewarded for his services by the Auditorship of the Civil List, a situation to which the substantial remuneration of £1400 a year was attached; and in 1820 he had been promoted to the Secretaryship of the Treasury. Sitting with Canning for Harwich,[2] enjoying Goderich's confidence in the Treasury, he had gained the friendship of both of these ministers; but he had acquired no Parliamentary distinction which justified his promotion. Declaring himself unequal to the high office which was thrust on him, he professed his readiness to accept a subordinate situation in the ministry, and only yielded at the personal intervention of the king.[3]

Herries.

The king's preference had apparently secured the Chancellorship of the Exchequer for Herries; but the announce-

[1] See the account told by Lord Palmerston himself in Bulwer's Life, Appendix, vol. i. At the Council at which Herries was appointed to the Exchequer, the architect of Windsor Castle applied to him for £15,000 for the Round Tower. The metropolitan improvements in progress at the time were well summed up by Lord Colchester: "The king's new palace on the site of Buckingham House is covered in; Carlton House has nearly disappeared; and the new terrace of houses towards the Mall is rising rapidly. The grass part of St. James's Park is to be laid out in shrubberies, like Regent's Park. New gateways colonnaded are already built at Hyde Park Corner, leading on one side by the king's garden into Constitution Hill, and on the other side of the Duke of Wellington's house into Hyde Park. A new bridge of five arches has been thrown across the Serpentine, at the end nearest Kensington Gardens; and a new carriage drive has been made round the whole of the Park north of the Serpentine."—Colchester, vol. iii. p. 522. Cf. Greville, vol. i. p. 108.

[2] Canning sat for Harwich from 1823 to 1826; for Newport from 1826 to his acceptance of the Treasury, and thenceforward for Seaford.

[3] This story is told in Bulwer's *Palmerston*, Appendix, vol. i. p. 378; Greville, vol. i. p. 112; and Colchester, vol. iii. p. 524.

ment of the king's intention raised a storm of opposition among the Whig members of the Cabinet. The Whigs differed from Herries' views; they disliked the circumstances under which the appointment was made; and they insisted on the reconsideration of the arrangement. Their annoyance was greater because they had desired Lord Holland's admission to the Cabinet, and the king refused to avail himself of Holland's services. The Whigs, under these circumstances, became so angry that they threatened to leave the ministry in a body; and the quarrel was only temporarily arranged by Goderich going down to Windsor and obtaining a temporary postponement of Herries' appointment. Huskisson since the conclusion of the session had been travelling on the Continent. A special messenger had been sent to him with the particulars of Canning's death, and with the offer of the Colonial Office; and the distracted Cabinet decided on letting Herries' appointment rest till Huskisson's return. In the meanwhile a paragraph was sent to the newspapers, which had announced Herries' promotion, to explain that the appointment had not been definitely made. For a few days the newspapers joined in a chorus of praise of Herries, so loud and so unmeasured in its strain as to suggest a doubt of its sincerity. *Courier*, *Post*, *Times*, *New Times*, *Sun*, and *Herald* inserted their little paragraphs in praise of the minister-designate. The Funds, it was stated, fell on the rumour that Herries had declined the office; the City recovered its complacency on a report that he had accepted it. George IV.'s declaration that Herries was the fittest man in England for the office was almost justified by the language of the press.

His appointment to the Exchequer.

The praise was probably overdone; the reaction was suddenly coming. Towards the end of August a newspaper hinted that Herries was connected with a great capitalist, the arbiter of the European exchanges. The *Chronicle* immediately denounced the connection, and declared that it disqualified Herries for the Exchequer. The *Courier* contradicted the *Chronicle;* the *Chronicle* replied to the *Courier;* and for a week people thought of nothing but the acquaintance of Herries with Rothschild.

The *Times*, which was supposed to favour the Whig section of the Cabinet, threw its weight into the scale against Herries, reserving its article for the day on which Huskisson reached England. Huskisson required, however, little encouragement to induce him to oppose the appointment; and his language was so firm that the king was persuaded to reconsider the contemplated arrangement. George IV. suggested that Huskisson should take the Exchequer, but Huskisson preferred the quiet of the Colonial Office. Sturges Bourne and Tierney, to whom the Exchequer was subsequently offered, also shrank from the responsibilities of the office. The king thereupon fell back upon Herries. Lansdowne resigned, but withdrew his resignation; and the world was assured that the ministry was complete, and that Herries had accepted the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.[1]

The difference had been settled, but its history augured ill for the future of the ministry. Herries was "nettled by the attacks made upon him;" the Whigs were "sick to death of their situation and anxious to resign." Every one was uncomfortable, and the Prime Minister was more uncomfortable than any of his colleagues. His unfitness for his situation was already evident, and every section of his Administration agreed in denouncing his weakness.[2] At the commencement of November ministers began to return to London. Tierney, Huskisson, and Herries were all at their offices, and Tierney took occasion to speak to Goderich about the future of the ministry. In the previous session Canning had announced his intention to nominate a finance committee to inquire into the condition of the revenue. Tierney suggested that Althorp should be asked to take the chair of this committee. Goderich mentioned the matter to

Dissensions in the Ministry.

[1] The history of this strange intrigue will be found in the newspapers of the day, which are worth referring to. See also Greville, vol. i. pp. 108–113; Palmerston, vol. i. p. 197, and Appendix, p. 378; Mr. M'Cullagh Torrens' *Life of Lord Melbourne*, vol. i. p. 236; comparing these statements, of course, with the account which Mr. Herries has given of the matter in his *Life of Herries*. Lord Lansdowne's resignation is mentioned in the *Times* of the 3rd of September.

[2] Greville, vol. i. pp. 110, 111.

Huskisson, as leader of the House of Commons; and, as Huskisson agreed with Tierney, Tierney undertook to sound Lord Spencer, Althorp's father, as to the probability of his son's accepting the duty. Althorp conditionally accepted the chairmanship; and it then occurred to Goderich to inquire whether Herries was acquainted with the negotiation. He was distressed to learn that no one had thought of consulting him about the propriety of the appointment, and he advised Huskisson to take some opportunity of doing so. The desired opportunity soon occurred. On the 28th of November Herries happened to call on Huskisson at the Colonial Office, and he then learned for the first time that some kind of negotiation had been going on with Althorp. He at once objected to the proposed appointment, and on the next day sought an interview with Goderich, and remonstrated with him on the slighting manner in which he had been treated. Goderich expressed his regret at the occurrence. Huskisson subsequently followed Goderich's example, and told Herries that he had written to Tierney to stop any further proceedings. Herries fancied that Huskisson had deferred to his remonstrance, and was pacified by this opinion.

A disagreeable quarrel had proved the hollowness of the truce between the two sections of the Government. Conscious of their humiliating position, Ministers decided that they could not go on without additional strength; and on the 8th of December Goderich personally urged the king to admit Holland and Wellesley to the Cabinet. The king refused; and on the following Tuesday Goderich, repeating his advice in a letter, begged leave, unless it were adopted, to retire. Lansdowne and Huskisson saw the letter which Goderich had written, and professed their readiness to abide by his decision. The Prime Minister, however, after showing the letter to his colleagues, added a postscript on his own account, pleading domestic circumstances as the reason for his resignation. The king, with much dexterity, treated the postscript as the letter; and, expressing his regret at the domestic reasons which necessitated Goderich's retirement, sent for Harrowby. Harrowby

at once refused the dignity which the king thrust upon him; and Goderich, in consequence, consented to remain in office. The town had hardly recovered from its surprise on learning that Harrowby had been sent for, when it was astonished to learn that Goderich had resumed his situation.[1]

Herries had naturally neglected his own personal grievance while the Government was on the eve of dissolution; he reverted to it on the restoration of Goderich to power. On the 21st of December, two days after the Prime Minister's resumption of office, he wrote to Goderich to say that it was "time that some steps should be taken with respect to the Committee of Finance;" that he objected to Althorp's appointment, both on public and private grounds; and that he was ready to relieve his chief from the difficulty by the cheerful resignation of his office. Goderich promised to see Huskisson on the subject. Huskisson, however, was out of town. He did not return to London till the 27th of December; and Goderich then discovered that he declined to give way to Herries, and that he intended to retire from office if Althorp were not appointed chairman of the Finance Committee. Goderich, finding it impossible to shake Huskisson's determination, again appealed to Herries. But Herries was as inexorable as Huskisson. Goderich could get nothing out of him but a constant reference to the ultimatum in his letter. "'Pray do not resign,' said the noble lord at the head of affairs. 'My letter of the 21st of December,' said the Chancellor of the Exchequer. 'But I am agitated beyond measure,' said the noble lord. 'My letter of the 21st of December,' continued the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The noble lord pleaded almost in tears; but still the stony-hearted Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed to his letter of the 21st of December."[2] Unable to reconcile his colleagues, Goderich

The Ministry falls.

[1] The best account of this will be found in Palmerston's letter of 18th December to his brother (Palmerston, vol. i. p. 207). Cf. also Greville, vol. i. p. 116, and Torrens' *Melbourne*, vol. i. p. 299.

[2] See Brougham's amusing description of the negotiation (*Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 553). Huskisson's explanation will be found in ibid., p. 463; Herries', ibid., p. 487; Goderich's, ibid., p. 272.

went down to Windsor and stated the matter to the king. George IV., for once in his life, knew his own mind. Properly indignant with the weak minister, who had brought the Government into disrepute, he told him "to go home and take care of himself," and send the Chancellor to him. "Goody Goderich"—so the world laughingly declared—began to cry, and his "Majesty offered him his pocket-handkerchief."[1]

The Duke of Wellington forms a new Government,

So ended the weakest Administration of the present century. Goderich had furnished one more example of the truth that a capable lieutenant may prove an incapable chief, and had fallen a victim to his fear of responsibility. By the Chancellor's advice the king immediately sent for Wellington, and desired him to form a Government. The Duke inquired whether George IV. attached any conditions to the duty; and was assured that he was free to apply to any one except Grey; "that the Roman Catholic question was not to be made a Cabinet question;" and "that there was to be a Protestant Lord Chancellor, a Protestant Lord Lieutenant, and a Protestant Lord Chancellor in Ireland."[2] The Duke, after receiving these instructions, applied to Peel. Peel thought it impossible to form an efficient ministry from the extreme Tories, and advised an attempt to secure the co-operation of Canning's friends. The attempt was made; but its success was, for some time, doubtful. The Whigs endeavoured to dissuade Huskisson from rejoining the Tories. The Tories offered him excellent terms for his assistance. His own presence at the Colonial Office, Dudley's at the Foreign Office, Grant's at the Board of Trade, Palmerston's assistance in the Cabinet, and Lamb's continuance in the Irish Office might be taken as a guarantee that an impartial system would be pursued towards the Catholics. Huskisson was satisfied with these terms, and consented to take part in the new Administration.

and is joined by Huskisson,

Huskisson's assistance made Wellington's task comparatively easy. Five members of the Goderich Cabinet—Lyndhurst,

[1] Palmerston, vol. i. p. 212; Greville, vol. i. p. 120; Colchester, vol. iii. p. 540.

[2] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 12.

Dudley, Huskisson, Grant, and Palmerston—retained their old offices. The Duke himself took the Treasury; Peel returned to the Home Office; Bathurst became President of the Council; Goulburn replaced Herries at the Exchequer; and Herries was consoled with the Mastership of the Mint. Anglesey succeeded Wellesley as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; Wetherell replaced Scarlett as Attorney-General. Wynn was dismissed from the India Board, and replaced by Melville. Wellington at the same time availed himself of the services of two more useful auxiliaries. Lord Aberdeen had already acquired some little distinction in the political and literary world. Educated at Harrow, the schoolfellow of Byron, he had been described in the "English Bards and Scotch Reviews" as "the travelled thane, Athenian Aberdeen." He had been intrusted in 1813 with a mission to Vienna, and had secured the adhesion of Austria to the Treaty of Toplitz. He became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Lord Ellenborough was the eldest son of the great judge, whose prejudices and ability invested his tenure of the Chief Justiceship with peculiar interest. The son had already displayed in debate the eloquence and capacity which afterwards made him one of the most powerful speakers in the House of Lords. He became Lord Privy Seal.

and by Lords Aberdeen and Ellenborough.

Wellington had succeeded in obeying the king's commands and in forming an Administration. But the new Cabinet was assailed with abuse from almost every quarter. The old Tory party had been wild with delight at the restoration of Wellington and Peel to power; but its pleasure was damped by the admission of Huskisson to the Cabinet and the exclusion of Eldon from it. "Any ministry," wrote Newcastle, "which excludes Lord Eldon and includes Mr. Huskisson cannot gain my confidence." "It grieves me to think," wrote Sidmouth, "that an opportunity of forming an Administration which would have given entire satisfaction to the country has been lost. The admissions and the omissions are deeply to be deplored." Eldon himself was hurt at the neglect of his friends, and declared that the ministry was "better than the

last, but not what was wished and expected."[1] The annoyance of the Whigs, however, was far greater than that of the extreme Tories. The Whigs declared that the appointment of a military Prime Minister was unconstitutional;[2] they complained that Huskisson had betrayed them; Canning's widow, Lady Canning, considered that he had outraged her husband's memory. "The part of the transaction which will appear extraordinary," wrote Greville, "is that the Government having been broken up by a quarrel between Huskisson and Herries, the opposite party come in, and both these ministers remain with them. In private life the transaction would look very like a fraud, and be open to great suspicion."[3]

Attack upon Huskisson.

In the midst of the ferment which thus existed, Huskisson had to seek re-election from his Liverpool constituents. Nettled by the attacks upon him, he was driven into a justification of his conduct. "He had insisted on receiving, and had received, from the Duke of Wellington"—so, at least, he was reported to have said—"positive and special pledges that a particular line of policy should be followed, and that his Grace should tread in all respects in the footsteps of Mr. Canning."[4] These words, uttered in the heated atmosphere of a popular election, were regarded as a declaration that Huskisson had demanded and obtained a guarantee for the future policy of the ministry. People who were present when the speech was made declared that the words which Huskisson had used were stronger than those attributed to him in the reports; and every one believed that he had said that "the Duke of Wellington had acceded to his stipulation for the continuance of the system of free trade" and of Canning's foreign policy.[5] It was natural that such unguarded remarks should attract attention

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. pp. 542, 543. *Eldon*, vol. iii. p. 33. Cf. also Duke of Newcastle's letter to Duke of Wellington, in Wellington's *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 257.

[2] See Brougham's speech (*Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 56).

[3] Greville, vol. i. pp. 123, 125, 127. Cf. Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 363.

[4] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Hist., p. 13. The passage was toned down for publication in Huskisson's *Speeches*, vol. iii. p. 679.

[5] Colchester, vol. iii. pp. 545, 547.

in both Houses of Parliament. In the House of Commons Huskisson found it necessary to explain away the meaning of his words. In the House of Lords Wellington thought fit to deny the accuracy of the statement. "If my right honourable friend," he said, "had entered into any such corrupt bargain as he was represented to describe, he would have tarnished his own fame as much as I should have disgraced mine."

A misunderstanding of this description at the outset augured ill for the future harmony of the Administration. The rock, however, on which the Goderich Cabinet had been broken was discreetly avoided. Peel took the nomination of the Finance Committee into his own hands, put the leading members of all parties upon it, carried their appointment without material opposition, and placed Sir H. Parnell, an Irish member with liberal views and a considerable knowledge of finance, in the chair.[1] But the appointment of the Finance Committee was one of the simplest questions which the ministry had before it. Many other matters, in which the public felt a greater interest, were waiting for a settlement. For the best part of a century the Dissenters had passively submitted to the anomalous position in which they had been placed by the legislature. Nominally unable to hold any office under the Crown, they were annually "whitewashed" for their infringement of the law by the passage of an Indemnity Act. The Dissenters had hitherto been assenting parties to this policy. They fancied that the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts would logically lead to the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, and they preferred remaining under a disability themselves to running the risk of conceding relief to others.

The Dissenters.

The tacit understanding which thus existed between the Church on the one side and Dissent on the other was maintained unbroken till 1827. It was challenged in that year by William Smith, the member for Norwich. Smith was a London banker; he was a Dissenter; and he felt keenly the "hard, unjust, and unnecessary" law which disabled him from holding

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 448.

"any office, however insignificant, under the Crown," and from sitting "as a magistrate in any corporation without violating his conscience." He took the opportunity which the annual Indemnity Act afforded him of stating these views in the House of Commons. As he spoke the scales fell from the eyes of Liberal members. The moment he sat down, Harvey, the member for Colchester, twitted the Opposition with disregarding "the substantial claims of the Dissenters," while those of the Catholics were urged year after year "with the vehemence of party," and supported by "the mightiest powers of energy and eloquence." The taunt called up Lord John Russell, and elicited from him the declaration that he would bring forward a motion on the Test and Corporation Acts, "if the Protestant Dissenters should think it to their interest that he should do so."[1]

The Test and Corporation Acts.

A year afterwards, on the 26th of February 1828, Russell rose to redeem the promise which he thus gave. He rested his case on the great principle that "every man ought to be allowed to form his religious opinions by the impressions on his own mind, and that, when so formed, he should be at liberty to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, without being subjected to any penalty or disqualification whatever." He characterised the Indemnity Act as an Act "passed yearly to forgive good men for doing good service to their country;" and he showed that the conditions under which the Act had been originally passed were entirely altered.[2] Russell found his chief opponent in Sir Robert Inglis, an English baronet representing an Irish constituency, who, from ability in debate and from his narrow views on religious subjects, was already becoming a champion-designate of the Church. Inglis declared that he resisted the motion because he believed that its success would be the forerunner of further attacks upon the Church. "I prefer that the contest should still continue about the outworks, and that we should not surrender them, because I am too sure that in that

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. pp. 12–19.

[2] Lord J. Russell's speech will be found in ibid., vol. xviii. p. 676.

case we should have to fight for the citadel." The debate thus commenced continued throughout the night. The friends of Canning voted with the rest of their colleagues, on the ground that the Test and Corporation Acts "had virtually and practically been repealed." Notwithstanding this support, the ministry was beaten by a large majority. "Many attached friends of the Established Church—Lord Sandon and Sir Thomas Acland," for example—voted against them, and Russell's motion was carried by 237 votes to 193.[1]

The ministry had sustained a crushing and unexpected reverse. For the moment it was doubtful whether it could continue in office. It was saved from the necessity of resigning by the moderation and dexterity of Peel. Peel considered that nothing could be more unfortunate for the Church than to involve the House of Commons in a conflict with the House of Lords on a religious question; and that an earnest effort should be made to induce the highest ecclesiastical authorities cheerfully and voluntarily to acquiesce in measures which were calculated to conciliate the good-will of the Dissenters. On his advice the Bishops consented to substitute a formal declaration for the test hitherto in force. The declaration, which contained a promise that the maker of it would "never exert any power or any influence to injure or subvert the Protestant" Established Church, was to be taken by the members of every corporation, and at the pleasure of the Crown, by the holder of every office. Russell, though he disliked the declaration, assented to it for the sake of securing the success of his measure. It was accordingly engrafted without opposition on the bill, which had been introduced to give effect to the resolution of the 26th of February; and with this amendment the measure was sent to the House of Lords.[2]

Peel proposes a compromise,

Russell had undoubtedly secured a great victory for the friends of religious liberty; but the fruits of his victory could

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 781. Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 68.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xviii. pp. 1180–1329. The details of Peel's negotiation with the Bishops will be found in his *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 69–99.

not have been reaped if it had not been for the assistance of Peel. In ordinary circumstances, the measure which the Commons had passed would have been immediately rejected by the Lords. Peel, however, had not merely concluded a successful compromise in the House of Commons; he had at the same time effectually checkmated the Tory party in the Peers Eldon was as anxious as ever to assume the championship of the Church. But it was one thing to protect an institution whose regular garrison was prepared to make an effort for its defence; it was another to defend a cause which was flung over by its natural supporters. The Archbishop of York, speaking in the name of the Church, assented to the bill; the Bishops of Durham and Chester supported the Archbishop; and Eldon's honest anger at the "bad, mischievous, and revolutionary measure" fell on ears that would not hear. It was in vain that Redesdale, though he was eighty years of age, drove up from Gloucestershire for the purpose of opposing the bill. It was in vain that the Duke of Cumberland identified himself with the minority, and resolutely resisted the attack on the Church. The composition of the minority only testified to the change which had been silently effected in the views of the nation. The old men of eighty, faithful to the principles universally accepted in their younger days, were outvoted by the younger members who had been nurtured in the freer atmosphere of the nineteenth century. All that the Peers could do was to amplify the first words of the declaration, and insist upon its being made "solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of Almighty God and upon the true faith of a Christian." The Peers hardly saw the full consequences of their amendment. In affording the Dissenter relief they had imposed a fresh disability on the Jew.[1]

which is carried in the Lords.

The victory had been won; the bill had been carried; the

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 99; Eldon, vol. iii. pp. 38–44; Colchester, vol. iii. p. 555, who was so intent on supporting Eldon that he does not notice the successful amendment. *Hansard*, vol. xviii. pp. 1450, 1571, 1592; vol. xix. p. 39.

disabilities of the Dissenters had been removed; and a successful blow had, at last, been struck at the monopoly of the Church. Ten days after the bill repealing the Test and Corporation Acts had passed the Peers, Burdett brought forward the Roman Catholic question in the House of Commons. The debate which ensued upon his motion extended over three nights. The Cabinet was equally divided in the division. Three members—Huskisson, Palmerston, and Grant—supported Burdett; three other members—Peel, Goulburn, and Herries—voted against him. Burdett found himself, in a full House, in a majority of six. A similar motion, in 1827, had been rejected by a majority of four. The minority in 1827, the majority in 1828, had consisted of the same number—272 members. The strength of the Protestants had decreased in the interval from 276 to 266 votes.[1]

The Roman Catholic question.

Peel was so discouraged by this defeat that he told Wellington that he must retire at an early period from the Government. He begged the Duke, in the meanwhile, to refrain from using any language which would preclude him from seriously considering the whole question in the recess. The Duke agreed with the advice which was thus given to him. On the 9th of June, Lansdowne brought the resolution of the Commons before the House of Lords, and was beaten by a majority of 44. But men noticed the altered tone in which the claims of the Roman Catholics were resisted by the ministry. The Chancellor, who, a year before, had distinguished himself by the vehemence of his opposition, admitted that the subject presented great difficulty. Lyndhurst's admission was subsequently confirmed by the Prime Minister; and Lansdowne openly deduced from their language that ministers intended to bring forward some measure of their own. Lansdowne was not the only person who placed this interpretation on the speeches of ministers. Protestant peers, at the dinner-table and in the Park, asked each other what the Duke meant by his unexpected language. Tory peers, trembling for the

[1] For the debate and division see *Hansard*, vol. xix. pp. 375–680.

future, attempted to extract some explanation from the Prime Minister.[1]

A great difficulty had, in fact, arisen which no minister could have ignored. The ministry had not lasted for half a year, but it had been rent during the whole period by internal divisions. The members of it held radically different views on almost every question which came before them. They could not agree upon foreign policy; they could not agree about the corn laws; they could not agree about Reform; they only abstained from quarrelling on the Roman Catholic question because they had agreed from the first to differ upon it. The corn laws formed the first subject on which an open rupture took place. The Duke had defeated the bill of 1827, and his conduct on that occasion had forced him to deal with the question himself. Early in March the Cabinet met to settle the subject. The Duke desired that the 20*s.* duty should commence when the average price of wheat stood at 65*s.* instead of 60*s.* a quarter; he proposed to retain his famous warehousing amendment of the previous year. Huskisson at once declared that he could not face the House of Commons with such a measure, and the Cabinet broke up without coming to any decision. It met again on the following day, and the Duke pressed upon his colleagues the adoption of at any rate one of his two amendments. Huskisson refused to agree to either. Peel supported Huskisson; and the Cabinet again separated, the Duke in evident ill-humour. The Cabinet met for the third time on the next day. The Duke still clung to the principle of making some distinction between corn imported direct from abroad and corn taken out of a warehouse. Every single member of his Cabinet was against him; but the Duke stood firm, and the Cabinet separated for the third time without arriving at any decision.

The corn laws.

The discussions of the Cabinet upon them.

During the discussions which took place in the Cabinet Huskisson suggested that a 20*s.* duty should commence when

[1] For the debate see *Hansard*, vol. xix. pp. 1133–1296. Cf. also Colchester, vol. iii. pp. 569–572.

the average price of wheat stood at 60*s.*; but that, if more than 200,000 quarters of corn were imported in any twelve weeks, the duty should be increased by one-fourth till the average price amounted to 66*s.* Grant, the President of the Board of Trade, objected to this concession. For the sake of meeting Grant's objections, Peel proposed that the increase of duty should be only a fifth instead of a fourth. All the Cabinet except Grant assented to this suggestion. Grant asked for time to think it over. His immediate friends in the Cabinet—Huskisson, Palmerston, and Dudley—begged him to agree to it. They pointed out to him that his own retirement must necessarily be followed by Huskisson's resignation; that resignation on such ground would be ridiculous; and that the world would insist on believing that it was due to differences on other subjects. They were not able to shake their colleague, and Huskisson, with a heavy heart, went to the king and tendered his resignation. Grant's resolution, however, did not survive his colleague's departure. After Huskisson had left him, Goulburn called upon him, and persuaded him to yield. While he was speaking to the king, and explaining the reasons of his resignation, Huskisson received a message from Peel that Grant had consented to go on. The rupture of the Administration, which had been apparently imminent, was thus averted.[1] Parliament ultimately accepted the principle which the Cabinet had adopted; and a new corn law, fixing the duty one-fifth higher than it had been fixed in 1827, was passed.[2]

The rupture was, however, only postponed for the time. A more difficult domestic question than the corn laws was ripe for settlement. The general election of 1826 had been characterised by the proceedings which had from time immemorial distinguished these contests. Constituencies had been bought and sold; and corrupt voters, imitating the example of their betters, had, as usual, sold themselves. The

[1] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i p. 245. Cf. *Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 1379.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xix. p. 1524. The duty under the new bill amounted to 32*s.* 8*d.* on the imperial quarter when the price of wheat was 54*s.*, falling as the price rose, and rising as it fell.

two boroughs in which bribery had been most shameless, or in which the constituents had taken the least precautions against detection, were Penryn and East Retford. Penryn was an old offender. Its conduct had been investigated in 1807 and 1819; and the candidates in 1826 were so much impressed with the recollection of these previous investigations, that they ordered the town-crier to declare that the practice previously resorted to of making the electors "comfortable" would be discontinued. It is proverbially easy, however, to form a good intention; it is a much more difficult matter to carry it into effect. The electors, missing their accustomed comforts, refused to vote. The poll, during the two first days of the election, went on languidly; and the virtue of the candidates surrendered to the passive resistance of the electors.

Bribery at Penryn and East Retford.

The case of East Retford was even more flagrant than that of Penryn. It was proved to the committee from the evidence of several witnesses that it was "a notorious, long-continued, and general practice for the electors who voted for the successful candidates to receive twenty guineas from each of them; so that those burgesses who voted for both the members returned have customarily received forty guineas for such exercise of their elective franchise." In addition to this notorious, long-continued, and general practice, "the most extensive treating was established there as a rooted and inveterate habit." "Some months prior to the election," and "beyond the period of the return, several public-houses in the interest of" the successful candidates were open to the voters.[1] Penryn and East Retford, indeed, were not singular in their offence; they were only singular in being found out. Their case was, however, so gross that even an unreformed Parliament could not avoid taking notice of it. On the 8th of May 1827, Legh Keck, the member for Leicestershire, obtained leave to introduce a bill for the better prevention of bribery at Penryn. On the 11th of June, Tennyson, the member for

[1] For the case of Penryn, see *Hansard*, vol. xvii. pp. 682–703. For that of East Retford, ibid., p. 1200.

Blechingley, obtained leave to introduce a bill for the disfranchisement of East Retford, and for the transfer of its two members to Birmingham. For the first time since the disfranchisement of Grampound a really practical proposal had been made for the discouragement of bribery.

The East Retford bill was introduced at a late period of the session. It was read a second time on the 23rd of June, and then dropped, for the year, by its promoters.[1] The Penryn bill made further progress. It was read a second time on the 18th May; the House went into committee upon it on the 28th May, and Russell proposed in committee the disfranchisement of the borough. Canning, rising as Prime Minister, thought that the degree of guilt which had been proved against Penryn did not justify so strong a measure as the total disfranchisement of the town. But he could not even carry his own Cabinet with him. Russell's amendment was adopted by 124 votes to 69; and the bill, thus disfranchising Penryn, was read a third time and passed on the 7th of June.[2]

Fresh dissensions in the Cabinet,

In the session of 1827, then, the House of Commons had assented to the principle of disfranchising East Retford, and had passed a measure disfranchising Penryn. Both the bills were again brought forward at the commencement of 1828. On the 31st of January Russell obtained leave to introduce a bill for transferring the elective franchise from Penryn to Manchester; and, on the same evening, Tennyson introduced a bill for transferring the representation of East Retford to Birmingham.[3] The Cabinet had hardly been a fortnight in office, but these motions instantly involved its members in a quarrel. The Tory section of the Cabinet desired, instead of disfranchising the boroughs, to throw them into the adjacent hundreds. The Liberal section was in favour of transferring the representation to some large towns. Peel, who on most questions was the arbiter among his colleagues, suggested that the difference might be settled by a compromise; that one of

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xvii. p. 1379. [2] Ibid., pp. 1055, 1155.
[3] Ibid., vol. xviii. p. 83.

the boroughs might be thrown into the hundred, and that the representation of the other might be given to a town. The compromise was accepted; but its acceptance led to a fresh discussion. Huskisson wished to disfranchise Retford because its case was the worst. Peel wished to disfranchise Penryn because its conduct had been more frequently before Parliament, and because Cornwall was more thickly studded with boroughs than any other county. Peel's opinion was ultimately adopted; and the Cabinet, after almost endless debate, arrived at an agreement.[1]

On the 21st of March, when the East Retford bill was in committee, Peel proposed the compromise which the Cabinet had agreed to. The House assented to the proposition of its leader, and agreed "to an instruction to the committee on the Retford bill to alter it by substituting the hundred of Bassetlaw for the borough of Birmingham. The Penryn bill was, in the meanwhile, "sent to the Lords," and "East Retford lay-to, to wait the result of Penryn. The Cornishmen, however, regained courage, and swore so stoutly at the bar of the Lords, that even Lord Carnarvon, who had charge of the disfranchisement bill, gave up the case, as far as sending the right to a town, and proposed the hundred instead. In this state of things Tennyson gave notice that he should, on the 19th of May, go on with Retford, and Nicholson Calvert was to move in committee his alteration substituting the hundred for Birmingham."[2] On the afternoon of the day on which the consideration of the East Retford bill was resumed, the Cabinet met. Peel declared that he considered himself free to vote as he liked. Huskisson stated that he had pledged himself from the first, if only one place were disfranchised, to vote for sending that place to a town. Bathurst objected, in any event, to the enfranchisement of a large town; and Melville said that Grampound had been dealt with as an open question in 1821, and that Retford might

which are carried into the House.

[1] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 253. Cf. *Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 1280.

[2] Bulwer's Palmerston, p. 254. It is impossible to improve on Lord Palmerston's concise and clear description.

similarly be made an open question in 1828. The Cabinet, as usual, separated without arriving at any decision. Peel went down to the House and supported Nicholson Calvert's proposal to enfranchise the hundred. Huskisson, taunted with his previous pledges, privately told his colleagues that he could not support Calvert, and pressed for delay. Delay, however, could not be obtained; the House divided on Calvert's amendment; and Huskisson voted against Peel. Palmerston followed Huskisson into the lobby; but, notwithstanding this defection, Peel found himself in a majority of 18.[1]

Peel was unable to conceal his annoyance at Huskisson's conduct. He looked nettled and discomposed, and avoided his refractory colleagues. They, on their part, took the matter in various ways. Palmerston went home to bed, and thought no more about it. Instead of going to bed, Huskisson, on reaching home, wrote a hasty letter to Wellington. "After the vote which, in regard to my own consistency and personal character, I have found myself, from the course of this evening's debate, compelled to give on the East Retford question, I owe to you, as the head of the Administration, and to Mr. Peel, as the leader of the House of Commons, to lose no time in affording you an opportunity of placing my office in other hands." The Duke received the letter at ten o'clock on the following morning. He immediately showed it to Bathurst, who happened to be with him at the time; and Bathurst advised him to pin his colleague to his word, and to transmit Huskisson's resignation to the king. The Duke, sick of the incessant disputes which had paralysed the action of the Cabinet, adopted Bathurst's advice. He wrote a short note to Huskisson, saying that his letter had given him great concern, but that he had considered it his duty to lay it before the king. Nothing could exceed the surprise with which Huskisson realised the consequences of his foolish letter. He had persuaded himself that an offer to resign was a different thing from a positive resignation; that his duty to the Duke compelled him to offer to retire, and that the Duke's duty towards the public

Huskisson resigns.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xix. p. 813. Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 257.

should have induced his Grace to keep his Cabinet together. He accordingly sent Dudley and Palmerston to the Duke to arrange the matter. He wrote himself with the same object. But the Duke persisted in regarding the letter as a positive resignation. For the next few days the Canningites endeavoured to shake the Duke's decision. They found themselves unable to do so. Huskisson's hasty letter had been interpreted as the resignation of his office, and, sorely against his will, he had to resign.[1]

Exactly a year had passed since an ill-expressed letter of Huskisson's to Wellington had led to the loss of Canning's Corn Bill, and to the defeat of Canning's Administration. The experience which the writer had acquired in 1827 had not taught him the necessity of expressing himself with precision. His knowledge of the world, his long Parliamentary career, did not prevent him from indulging in a feeble whine that the Duke should have insisted on placing the natural interpretation upon his words. It is obvious, however, that no minister, with any respect for himself, could have regarded Huskisson's resignation as an isolated act, or have refrained from considering it in connection with the events of the preceding year and the divisions in the Cabinet. It may be doubted whether Wellington was wise in pinning his colleague to his words. It cannot be doubted that he was justified in doing so.

Huskisson's resignation is followed by that of four other members of the Cabinet.

Huskisson's resignation almost immediately led to the retirement of Palmerston, Grant, Dudley, and Lamb. Palmerston was, from the first, clear that Huskisson's retirement involved his own resignation. The Canningites had joined the Duke of Wellington in a body; it was evident to him that their duty towards one another compelled them to leave him in a body. For himself, he had been Secretary at War for nineteen years; he had served under Perceval, Liverpool,

[1] The correspondence and debate upon it will be found in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. pp. 449–478, and *Hansard*, vol. xix. p. 915. Cf. Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 258; Le Marchant's *Spencer*, 228, note; and Greville, vol. i. p. 130.

Canning, and Wellington, and his capacity for business and his genial manners had made him universally popular. Beginning life under Tory auspices, he had at last seceded from a Tory Government; and, notwithstanding the moderation of his views, he never again entered a Tory Cabinet. Grant, brilliant but irresolute, had with difficulty been dissuaded from resigning in March. There was no difficulty in persuading him to resign in May. Lamb was disposed to underrate the great qualities of the Duke; he disliked his connection with the extreme Tories, and he doubted whether there was any one in the Tory camp who was capable of replacing Huskisson at the Colonial Office. It did not require any great pressure to induce him to resign, and the only pang which his resignation cost him was due to the termination of his official intercourse with Peel. Dudley alone hesitated. He would have willingly (so said his friends) given £6000 a year out of his own pocket, instead of receiving that sum from the public, for the pleasure of remaining at the Foreign Office; and he was thrown into an agony of doubt and irresolution by the resignation of his colleagues. He was at last persuaded that both his credit and comfort would be gone if he remained in the Cabinet without the support of his own political friends; and, with a heavy heart and some hesitation, he at last consented to leave office.[1]

The political gossips of the day manifested some anxiety to see how the vacancies which were thus created would be filled up. The arrangements which the Duke made excited a good deal of comment. Sir Henry Hardinge, an officer in the Guards, replaced Palmerston as Secretary at War. Hardinge was nearly related to Lord Londonderry, who had brought him into Parliament as member for Durham. A more distinguished officer, Sir George Murray, who had been Quartermaster-General to the Duke in Spain, and who had commanded the forces in Ireland, succeeded Huskisson at the Colonial Office. Murray was member for Perthshire; but he had given no signs of any

The reconstruction of the Ministry.

[1] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 274, and Appendix, p. 380.

capacity in debate, and he had displayed no qualifications for administering a civil office. Lord Aberdeen was promoted to the Foreign Office; Lord Francis Leveson-Gower[1] became Chief Secretary for Ireland; and Vesey Fitzgerald, the member for Clare, President of the Board of Trade. These, and one or two minor alterations, completed the changes which had become necessary from Huskisson's retirement.

The delight of the Tories.

The joy of the Tory party at these changes was extravagant and unconcealed. Wellington had at last placed himself at the head of a purely Tory Administration. An unadulterated Cabinet of this description had not existed for twenty years. Even Perceval, the favourite champion of the Tory party, had never ventured on forming a ministry from such materials as those which the Duke had employed for the purpose. Wild in their delight, the Tories rallied at the Pitt dinner at the end of May, and, at Eldon's bidding, gave one cheer more for the Protestant ascendancy.[2] Their victory seemed, in fact, to all appearances complete. Liberal statesmen might regret the formation, not merely of a Tory Cabinet, but of a military Cabinet.[3] Whatever regret they might feel, they were powerless to interfere. Wellington "is King of England," was George IV.'s complaint a few months afterwards.[4] England, he might have added, had never enjoyed before so honest and simple-minded a king. But the Duke, in reality, was less powerful than George IV. supposed. The authority of the Cabinet did not repose in the Duke alone, but was shared by Peel, Lyndhurst, and the Duke. During the next two years these three men governed England, and the Cabinet did little else than register their decisions. For the higher purposes of government, Murray and Hardinge, Fitzgerald and Goulburn, were as powerless as the clerks and underlings who carried out their instructions in their several departments.

[1] Lord Francis Gower had just resigned an Under Secretaryship, but he was, notwithstanding, persuaded to accept the promotion.—Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. pp. 473, 491.

[2] Greville, vol. i. p. 132.

[3] *Hansard*, vol. xix. p. 904.

[4] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 612.

No one understood the principle on which Fitzgerald had been made President of the Board of Trade. Every one knew that he was a wealthy Irish landlord; every one gave him credit for comparatively liberal opinions. He had always supported the emancipation of the Roman Catholics; he had the reputation of being popular among his tenantry. But his chief recommendation for his new office was an ignorance of commercial matters. His mind (so his Vice-President confessed) on all questions of trade and commerce was like a sheet of blank paper.[1] His appointment was universally disapproved,[2] but its consequences were expected by no one. Every member of the House of Commons accepting office from the Crown was bound to vacate his seat and to offer himself for re-election. But Fitzgerald had a seat which was, to all appearances, secure. The forty-shilling freeholders of Clare had always attended their landlords to the poll with the instinctive readiness with which a flock of sheep follow their bellwether. The landlords of Clare would vote to the last man for the President of the Board of Trade in a Tory ministry. In accepting office Fitzgerald had apparently nothing to dread but the inconvenience of a few weeks' absence from London and the bustle and expense of a fresh election. The news of his appointment, however, had hardly reached Ireland before disquieting rumours of a possible contest disturbed the equanimity of his friends. The proceedings of the Catholic Association had not been checked by the Act of 1825. Itinerant orators were employed by it to proclaim its principles in every parish, and to enlist the great masses of the population under its banners. An agitation of this character was almost certain to be successful in Ireland. The people, warmed by the eloquence addressed to them, and encouraged by their priests, enlisted in the cause of the Association, and venerated O'Connell as the champion of their cause.

Vesey Fitzgerald's appointment.

Fitzgerald vacated his seat for Clare, and O'Connell decided on affording a signal proof of the power which he had acquired.

[1] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 286. [2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 569.

At the general election of 1826 he had persuaded the electors of Waterford to reject a Beresford and to return an unexceptionable candidate of his own proposing. What would the Saxon think if, in 1828, he told the electors of Clare to return himself? It was true that he was a stranger to the county; that the laws incapacitated him from sitting in Parliament; and that the electors, in returning him, would vote for him with the knowledge that their suffrages were thrown away. It was true also that Fitzgerald was eminently popular; that he was possessed of all the advantages derivable from property and station; that he had consistently voted for the relief of the Roman Catholics; and that he had held high office, years before, in the Irish Government. Every disqualification which could be urged against O'Connell, every advantage which Fitzgerald possessed, would only emphasise the victory of the Association. The news that O'Connell was a candidate roused Clare, from Galway to the Shannon, into a wild tumult of enthusiasm. On the day of the election the forty-shilling freeholders marched into Ennis, the county town, led by their parish priests, to vote for God and O'Connell. "The country is mad," wrote Fitzgerald. If it were mad there was at least method in its madness. For five days Fitzgerald maintained an unequal contest. All the gentry of the county, all the fifty-pound freeholders voted for him; but the poorer electors to a man voted for O'Connell. After five days, Fitzgerald, finding his prospects hopeless, retired from the contest, and O'Connell was triumphantly returned.[1]

The Clare election.

The blindest Protestant could not fail to perceive the importance of this election. The Irish had learned their power; they had returned a Roman Catholic to Parliament; there was no reason to doubt that they were as powerful in almost every other Irish county as they had proved themselves in Clare. There was no reason to suppose that they would refrain from exercising their power. "This business," wrote Eldon,[2] "must bring the Roman

The consequences of the election.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, pp. 120–129. Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 106–115.

[2] Eldon, vol. iii. p. 54.

Catholic question, which has been so often discussed, to a crisis and a conclusion." It was as obvious to every politician as it was plain to Eldon that the ministry could no longer sit still and do nothing. But there was a wide difference of opinion as to what should be done. Hot-headed Tories, who at the Pitt dinner had given one cheer more for the Protestant ascendancy, were quite ready to prescribe a remedy. The Clare election had been won by the forty-shilling freeholders; and the forty-shilling freeholders throughout Ireland must, in consequence, be disfranchised. Ireland, if necessary, must be crushed into obedience by the application of force; and the Roman Catholic majority in one country must be taught to acknowledge the supremacy of the Protestant majority in the other. There was, however, one weak point in this reasoning, which prudent men, less impulsive than extreme Tories, could not fail to perceive. Forty-shilling freeholders could not be disfranchised, repressive measures could not be adopted, without the consent of Parliament; and it was hopeless to expect that the House of Commons would consent to either remedy unless it was accompanied by the relief of the Roman Catholics. A few months before, indeed, a Protestant ministry, resolved on extreme measures, might have ventured on raising the cry of "No Popery" and on appealing to the intolerant masses of the English constituencies. But the Clare election had deprived Wellington of this expedient. The dissolution of Parliament would inevitably lead to fifty Clare elections and to the return of fifty O'Connells. No minister who was either wise or honest would venture on incurring such a risk.[1]

Some remedy, however, was indispensably necessary. The Catholic Association, encouraged by its victory, continued its agitation. The enthusiasm which its orators excited spread even among the constabulary and the troops. The Government believed that one word from O'Connell would plunge Ireland into civil war; it distrusted the men on whose arms it depended for the sup-

The condition of Ireland.

[1] The whole difficulty of the Clare election is admirably stated in Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 116–126.

pression of revolt or disorder. Anglesey, the Lord Lieutenant, was not likely to be easily disturbed at the prospect of bloodshed or to recommend a humiliating or an unnecessary concession. But Anglesey formed a strong opinion, which he did not hesitate to communicate to the Government, that "the first moment of composure and tranquillity should be seized to signify the intention of adjusting the question."[1] Peel's thoughts were gradually taking the same direction. They were confirmed by the strong terms in which Anglesey urged concession. He saw, or fancied that he saw, that the time had arrived when it was necessary to yield, and decided on recommending Wellington to concede political equality to the Roman Catholics. Though, however, concession was, in his judgment, necessary, Peel concluded that his own antecedents made it undesirable for him to propose it. No one could doubt the sincerity of his conversion if it were accompanied by his retirement from the ministry.

Lord Anglesey urges concession.

Peel adopts Lord Anglesey's opinion.

Wellington's opinions were also slowly undergoing a remarkable change. The Duke approached a political question in the manner in which he would have surveyed a military position. Quatre Bras was a convenient position while the Prussians stood firm at Ligny. The defeat of Blucher exposed the British flank, and necessitated the retreat to Waterloo. The Duke's flank had again been turned by O'Connell's victory in Clare; and, from a tactical point of view, a change of position had become necessary. The Duke's honesty was so great, and so well known, that no one could suspect him of any personal motive in assenting to such a change. Every one knew that he would gladly have retired from the Treasury and resumed the command of the army. Every one knew that he sacrificed his ease and his inclinations by occupying the chief place in the Administration. His change of front could, therefore, be made without exciting the suspicions which the change in Peel's views was certain to arouse.

Wellington also inclines to the same view.

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 149.

It has been already stated that Peel mentioned the change in his opinions to the Duke during the session. Soon after its close, he sent the Duke an elaborate explanation of his reasons for it.[1] The Duke consulted none of his other colleagues, except the Chancellor, upon the subject. He did not expressly assent to Peel's views; but he foresaw the probability that it would be requisite to act upon them. It was necessary, therefore, to anticipate the possibility of Peel's resignation. But Peel's retirement would involve the reconstruction of the Government; it would be no easy matter to fill up the vacancy which his resignation would create. No member of the extreme Tory party was capable of leading the House of Commons; and the ministry would, therefore, in all probability, be unable to survive his loss without obtaining additional strength from some other quarter. It was unlikely, however, that any prominent politician, outside the Tory party, would consent to join the ministry alone; and it was, therefore, desirable to reserve one or two places in the Cabinet to which any new allies might be appointed.

A singular circumstance made the arrangement thus contemplated practicable. For a year and a half the Duke of Clarence had filled the office of Lord High Admiral; but his eccentric conduct had estranged him from every officer in his department, and had put the country to considerable expense. He had insisted on personally inspecting every ship that went to sea; he was perpetually going down to Portsmouth and Plymouth to give colours to regiments that wanted none. Unhappy commanding officers, forced to entertain His Royal Highness, were half ruined with the expense of doing so. His council remonstrated; and he fancied that, if he went to sea, he would free himself from their control. He went down to Portsmouth, and took the command of a portion of the fleet intrusted by the king's orders to another officer. He returned, and insulted Sir George Cockburn, one of the Lords of the Admiralty. The other Lords rallied round Cockburn. The Prince declared that he

The Duke of Clarence's dismissal.

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 181.

could not remain in office if Cockburn were not removed. Wellington declined to sacrifice Cockburn to gratify the spite of the heir-presumptive to the throne; and the Prince accordingly had to resign the office which his eccentric habits disqualified him from holding.[1]

Wellington did not venture on the appointment of another Lord High Admiral. The Admiralty, as usual, was put under a commission; and, much against his will, Melville, who had been President of the Board of Control, was placed at the head of it. Ellenborough, who held the office of Privy Seal, was promoted to Melville's place; and the Privy Seal was left vacant. "I wish to keep it vacant," wrote Wellington to Peel, "because I am under the necessity of looking forward to future misfortunes. I consider you not pledged to anything; but I cannot but look to the not impossible case of your finding yourself obliged to leave us to ourselves. In this case I must have the command of all the means possible to make an arrangement to carry on the king's service, and I would keep other offices vacant if I could."[2]

The Tories were unacquainted with the reasons which influenced the Duke in keeping the Privy Seal vacant, but they were haunted by grave apprehensions respecting the future policy of the Cabinet. The satisfaction with which they had witnessed the separation of the Canningites from the ministry had been damped by the Duke's moderate language and by the events of the Clare election. They separated at the end of the session full of misgivings; and some of the earliest news which arrived from Ireland during the recess increased their fears, and confirmed their suspicions. None of the extreme Tories, who had hitherto resisted concession, had been more intolerant than George Dawson, the member for Derry, and the brother-in-law of Peel. Only a few months before he had especially distinguished himself by the pertinacity and violence

[1] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 295. Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 269. Greville, vol. i. p. 140; and cf. Ellenborough's *Diary*, vol. i. p. 192, where the exact nature of the charge against the Duke is given.

[2] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 272. Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 297.

of his attacks upon Canning. On the 12th of August, Dawson made a speech at Derry, in which he entered, at some length, into the condition of Ireland, and pointed to the impossibility of continuing a policy of resistance.[1] The speech fell like a thunderbolt on the Orange audience whom Dawson was addressing; it startled the stout Tory members who had listened to Dawson's eloquence in the House, and who had hitherto regarded him as an even stauncher Protestant than themselves. Would such a speech—so they asked one another—have been made by the brother-in-law of a minister without the minister's knowledge? Was it not, at any rate, a fair inference that the causes which had weight with Dawson might also be influencing Peel?

Dawson's speech at Derry.

The circumstances were, in fact, grave enough to account for any modification in the plans of a ministry. The Act, which had been passed in 1825, to suppress secret societies in Ireland had not proved successful. But the slight restraint which this Act had imposed on Catholics and Orangemen was removed by its expiration in July 1828. From that moment there was nothing to prevent Orange processions and Catholic meetings. The leaders of the Roman Catholic party, freed from all restrictions, extended the organisation of their association to the remotest districts of Ireland, and established a branch in every parish. The Protestants of Ulster, alarmed at the organisation of their hereditary foes, formed themselves into Brunswick Clubs, and awaited the attack which they affected to believe would be made upon them. The Irish stood arrayed in two hostile camps, ready, at the smallest encouragement, to fly at each other's throats. The accounts from the South were frightful. The men of Tipperary marched to monster meetings in military array. Peaceful citizens shuddered at the power which an irresponsible Association had created, and which the responsible Government seemed unable to control.[2] But the danger of disturbance was even greater in the North than in the South. In the South the people had everything their own way. There

The condition of Ireland.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Hist., p. 130. [2] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 206, 220.

was less chance of an explosion, because there was no opposing element on which the match could be struck. In the North, on the contrary, the people were more evenly balanced. Brunswickers and Catholics dwelt together in the same streets and in the same villages; and the possibility of collision was thus increased. There a chance spark might at any moment produce a flame, and the spark was certain to be forthcoming in Ireland. "They are very feverish in the North," wrote the Lord Lieutenant. "The Brunswickers are rivalling the Association both in violence and in rent."[1]

Lawless in Ulster.

O'Connell's chief assistants or rivals in the Roman Catholic Association in Dublin were Sheil and Lawless. Those who were acquainted with the triumvirate thought Sheil the ablest and Lawless the bravest or most desperate of the three. Lawless was a typical Irishman. He had the ready eloquence, the instinctive daring, the love of a row, which characterise his race. He was prepared to accept the most dangerous missions from the Association. There was no risk in addressing the enthusiastic meetings which assembled in their thousands in Munster and Connaught; but there was an undeniable danger in proceeding on a tour of agitation in Ulster. In September 1828 Lawless encountered this peril. Travelling from parish to parish, he addressed the people in the Catholic chapels, and inflamed their passions against their Protestant fellow-subjects. He entered Protestant towns at the head of vast trains of Roman Catholic admirers, and he boasted that he would take possession of Armagh at the head of his supporters. The Protestants, in reply to the challenge, assembled in arms to dispute his entry, and Lawless had to turn aside towards Ballybay. The military authorities, however, alarmed at the growing prospects of collision, persuaded him again to alter his purpose, and to retire on Carrickmacross. The Catholic Association, unprepared for actual warfare, recalled its intemperate agent; and the immediate danger which Lawless's progress had occasioned was thus removed.[2]

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 207, 208.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Hist., p. 140. Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 240.

The match had harmlessly burned itself out, and no serious explosion had occurred. But the people arrayed against each other were still ready and impatient for action. The men of the South, assembled in military array, were anxiously asking O'Connell and Sheil when they were to begin. For the sake of the great cause which they had pledged themselves to support, they had composed their domestic differences, and they had no longer the satisfaction of breaking each others' heads for the sake of a little amusement. What was the use of abstaining from their own broils if they were not going to fight any one else? Whom could they fight except the Orangemen and the Government? And when—when were they going to begin? Fortunately for the Roman Catholics of Ireland, the man at the head of their organisation was as wise as he was bold. O'Connell knew perfectly well that the first hostile movement on the part of the Catholics of the South would call a more formidable enemy into the field than the Brunswickers of the North. It was one thing to deal with the Protestants of Ulster; it was another to reckon with the Protestants of Great Britain. His authority had called a people to arms. The combatants, gathering together on either side of the arena, which Ireland had become, were preparing for the encounter which was apparently inevitable. The ministers, to use Sheil's striking simile, folded their arms and sat quiet and inactive, "as if two gladiators were crossing their swords for their recreation." What if O'Connell gave a new and more decisive proof of his influence and power? What if he allayed the tempest which his authority had raised? At the end of September he issued an address, and adjured the people to discontinue their meetings. An entire nation, obedient to his will, submitted without a murmur to the unexpected command.

The condition of Munster.

O'Connell gives the signal for peace.

The Government, which had been saved by O'Connell from the imminent danger which it had encountered, subsequently issued its own proclamation denouncing unlawful assemblies;[1]

[1] This proclamation is printed in *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 188.

it even ventured on arresting the intemperate emissary whom the Association had already recalled from Ballybay. But these tardy marks of returning vigour gave no one any confidence in its firmness. Anglesey's policy was denounced throughout Ireland. "The sentiment," wrote Vesey Fitzgerald to Peel, "is universal of disgust, indignation, and alarm at the proceedings of" his government. It was gratifying to reflect that the danger of civil war in Ireland had been averted. It was unsatisfactory to remember that the peril had been removed by the intervention of O'Connell.[1]

Protestant agitation in England.

The agitation which had extended throughout Ireland was not confined to that country. The Protestants of England banded themselves together in support of their Irish co-religionists. A Brunswick Club, of which Eldon became a member, was formed in London. Mass meetings to protest against any concession to the Roman Catholics were held in different parts of the country. The first and most famous of these was at Pennenden Heath, on the 24th of October. It was attended by twenty thousand persons; the foremost men in the county were present at it; and, on their advice, a petition to the House of Commons was adopted, praying that the Protestant Constitution might be preserved entire and inviolate. The example, which was thus set in Kent, found imitators in other parts of the country. Brunswick Clubs were formed, and men were enrolled in an organisation for the defence of the Church. Sturdy Protestants who had voted for the Six Acts were not ashamed to encourage this new demonstration of numbers. They saw no harm in adopting, for the sake of the Church, the measures which they had punished the Radicals for taking for the sake of Reform.[2]

In the meanwhile the Cabinet had arrived at no decision on the great question which was disquieting the country.

[1] Anglesey's friends, it is fair to add, complained that he got no support and no advice from the English Government. They stated that O'Connell's proclamation was issued at the advice of the Lord Lieutenant. See Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 308. Cf., for Fitzgerald's opinion, Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 263.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Hist., p. 147.

Anglesey was continually urging the necessity of concession upon his colleagues. Peel had already communicated his definite opinion to Wellington. The Duke desired to obtain the king's leave for the consideration of the subject by the Cabinet; and the king, pitiably irresolute, hesitated to give his consent. While things were in this condition, Curtis, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, wrote a remarkable letter to Wellington. Years before Curtis had held high office in the University of Salamanca; he had, in consequence, been thrown into communication with the Duke in Spain; and the Duke had formed a high opinion of the future Primate's honesty. Curtis was in the habit of occasionally corresponding with the Duke on Irish subjects. On the 4th of December 1828, he wrote to the Duke, urging on him the importance of settling the Roman Catholic question. The Duke rejoined that he was sincerely anxious to witness the settlement of it,[1] but that he saw no prospect of its settlement. Party had been mixed up with it to such a degree that men could not be brought to consider it dispassionately. "If," added the Duke, "we could bury it in oblivion for a short time, and employ that time diligently in the consideration of its difficulties on all sides, I should not despair of seeing a satisfactory remedy." It was not possible to extract a very clear meaning out of this letter. A Roman Catholic might say that the Duke's anxiety to settle the question proved him a convert to the cause. A Protestant might reply that the Duke had said plainly that there was no prospect of its settlement. Curtis himself seems to have interpreted the letter in the latter sense. He wrote to the Duke to assure him that there was no prospect of burying the question in oblivion. O'Connell, on the contrary, to whom Curtis gave the correspondence, affected to place the opposite interpreta-

Archbishop Curtis writes to the Duke.

[1] The Duke's secretaries—"these blockheads," Greville irreverently terms them—were very anxious to prove that the Duke had written "a settlement," not "the settlement."—Greville, vol. i. p. 148. Curtis's previous letters to the Duke will be found in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. Mr. Reeve properly calls them excellent letters.—Greville, vol. ii. p. 148, note.

tion upon the Duke's letter. He carried it to the Association and read it as a proof that the ministry was favourable to the claims of the Roman Catholics.

Anglesey's correspondence with O'Connell.

The Duke's letter had already caused some mischief. Curtis, however, was not satisfied with forwarding the correspondence to O'Connell. He sent a copy of it also to Anglesey, who replied that the correspondence was of the highest interest; that he was personally ignorant of the precise sentiments of Wellington; that he differed from the Duke in thinking that the question should be buried in oblivion; and that he was, on the contrary, anxious that all constitutional means should be employed to forward the cause. The Prime Minister had, in effect, recommended that the agitation should cease; the Lord Lieutenant suggested that agitation should continue. It was impossible that Wellington should pass over such a breach of discipline on the part of the Lord Lieutenant. Differences had already arisen between the Lord Lieutenant and himself, and Anglesey had already been informed that it was the intention of Government to remove him.[1] His indiscreet letter to Curtis hastened his removal. He was immediately recalled; and the Duke endeavoured to induce Bathurst to assume the Viceroyalty of Ireland. Bathurst was too prudent to exchange his position in England for the thankless and unprofitable task of keeping peace among the Irish. He refused; and the Duke thereupon selected the Duke of Northumberland for the office. Northumberland's figure and fortune would, it was expected, make him popular in Ireland. His own love of display and magnificence made the Viceroyalty agreeable to himself.[2]

Anglesey succeeded by the Duke of Northumberland.

[1] These differences had arisen on various subjects. Wellington wished, and Anglesey refused, to give Lady Westmeath a pension of £400 a year out of the Irish pension fund. Wellington wished Anglesey to remove two of the magistrates of Clare from the commission of the peace. Anglesey refused to do so, on the advice of his law officers. The Duke objected to Anglesey countenancing Lord Cloncurry, a member of the Catholic Association. Anglesey defended Cloncurry.—Greville, vol. ii. pp. 151, 157, 160. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. pp. 413, 442; and *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 1002, where the correspondence will be found. Cf. Croker, *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 3.

[2] Greville, vol. i. pp. 158, 159.

The new Lord Lieutenant was appointed in January 1829. He had always opposed the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. His appointment justified the inference that the ministry saw no prospect of settling the question. The king, in fact, refused to give way. Irritated beyond measure at the importunity of the Duke, he was firm in his opposition to concession. Failing with the king, the Duke, as a last chance, applied to the heads of the Church. He hoped that, if they showed any disposition to relent, the king might be induced to yield. But the prelates whom the Duke consulted were as much opposed to concession as the king. The Duke returned from his interview with them under the conviction that a settlement was more improbable than ever. King, Peers, and Church were all opposed to concession. It seemed hopeless to carry a measure of relief against the united opposition of the three. Peel, however, convinced of the necessity of the measure, which it seemed impossible to carry, drew up an elaborate memorandum tracing the growth of public opinion on the subject, and proving the necessity of dealing with it. He forwarded his memorandum to the Duke in a remarkable letter, in which he said that, if his own resignation should prove an insuperable obstacle to the settlement of the question, he would not persist in it. Armed with this memorandum, the Duke again appealed to the king; and five days afterwards assured Peel that without his aid he would be unable to obtain the king's assent to the measure, while his Parliamentary difficulties would be augmented tenfold. Peel at once expressed his readiness to remain in office. The Protestant members of the Cabinet had subsequently separate interviews with the king to induce him to give way. The king's resolution sank at the determined advice of his ministers. He felt—so he afterwards complained—like a person with a pistol at his breast,[1] and with nothing to fall back upon. Passionate and irresolute by turns, he declared his undying resistance at one moment; he complained of his inability to resist

Peel's offer to remain in office.

The king yields.

[1] Eldon, vol. iii. p. 83.

at another; and so his weak nature gradually failed, and the king, still protesting that he would "ne'er consent, consented."[1]

So matters stood at the end of the recess. Parliament was summoned for the 5th of February. It was necessary that the speech from the throne should announce the intentions of the Government. The duty of preparing the outline of the measure devolved upon Peel. He had made up his mind that concession was inevitable; he immediately saw the wisdom of making it complete. The broad principle which he laid down was equality of civil privilege; the exceptions to the rule should, he maintained, be as few as possible.

The Relief Bill prepared.

The secret of the Cabinet was well kept. No one knew what the Government was going to do. Rumours of possible concession were whispered in political circles, but men refused to accept these vague reports. Copies of the king's speech were, in accordance with the usual custom, forwarded to the leaders of the Opposition on the 4th of February, and the truth at once became known. Never had so great a sensation been unexpectedly created. The Whigs were naturally merry at the news; the Tories universally dejected. Tory peers met together to talk over the policy of the ministry and to vent their spite in furious abuse of Peel. Peel, they thought, was responsible for everything. Peel, they were agreed, had recklessly betrayed them. Could this be the same Peel who had seceded from Canning on the sole and express ground that he could not support the claims of the Roman Catholics? Could this be the same Peel who had been nicknamed "orange Peel" from the strength of his Protestant opinions? Conduct like his involved "a gross violation of political rectitude and consistency."[2] He could never again expect the support either of his party or of his constituents. The traitor must look for his reward from Rome. The Pope might add a new red letter day to the calendar, and celebrate the conversion of St. Peel.[3]

Indignation against Peel.

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 282–298.

[2] Lord Winchilsea in House of Lords (*Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 14).

[3] Denman, vol. i. p. 302.

Peel, in the meanwhile, had taken a decisive step. A sense of public duty had prevented him from resigning office; but no sense of public duty made it necessary for him to retain his connection with the University of Oxford. He wrote to the Vice-Chancellor announcing his intention of resigning, and leaving it to the University to determine the time at which it would be most convenient for him to do so. His resignation gave one English constituency an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the Roman Catholic question. A party in the University, capable of appreciating the circumstances which had led to his change of front, desired Peel's re-election. Another party, vigorous in Church principles, was vehemently opposed to it. Peel reluctantly assented to the wishes of his supporters and stood again. The Protestant party set up Sir Robert Inglis in opposition to him. The Church, however, was too strong for the minister. Protestant parsons hurried up to Oxford to vote against the statesman who was venturing to encourage Rome. Protestant statesmen drove down from London to vote against the minister whom a few months before they had regarded as the hope of their party. Peel was beaten by 755 votes to 609; and had, in consequence, to obtain some other seat. Sir Manasseh Lopes, the hero of Grampound, offered to vacate his seat at Westbury to accommodate the minister. Rumour said that the minister gave Sir Manasseh a large sum of money for the accommodation. The constituents of Westbury liked the bargain much less than their patron. Sir Manasseh was himself struck with one of the many missiles with which the town-hall was assailed. The return of Peel was secured with the greatest difficulty. Peel himself thought that if a Protestant candidate, who posted down from London, had arrived before instead of after the election, he would have been rejected by the little rotten borough.[1]

Peel resigns his seat for Oxford.

The result of the Oxford election, and the circumstances of

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 342. It may be added that Peel, speaking in 1846, said that he thought that he was wrong in resigning his seat in 1829. *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. lxxxiii. p. 1186.

the election for Westbury, afforded striking evidence of the clamour which the policy of the ministry had everywhere provoked. But less welcome symptoms of it were visible every day. Night after night staunch Protestants presented petition after petition against the proposals of the ministry. Week after week sturdy clergymen preached against concession in the pulpit. In the interval between Sunday and Sunday, tracts were circulated among the people to inflame them against the Roman Catholics. Every act of tyranny which the Romanists of previous ages had committed was described with horrible minuteness to stimulate the passions of the multitude. "No Popery" mobs paraded the streets of Glasgow, and insulted and ill-treated any persons who had the temerity to sign a petition in favour of religious liberty. The latent hostility which has always existed in Great Britain against Rome everywhere burst forth into an active flame. Stout Tories, regaining confidence amidst the surrounding clamour, urged the Government to appeal to the people, and to allow the nation to decide on the policy which it had proposed to Parliament. Westbury and Oxford had sufficiently proved what the results of such an appeal would be.[1]

Agitation in the country.

In the meanwhile the Cabinet had proceeded with one of their proposals. On the 10th of February, Peel, while still member for Oxford, introduced a bill for the suppression of the Catholic Association. Ministers did not, however, repeat the mistake which they had committed in 1825, of framing a complicated enactment which it would be impracticable to enforce. They simply proposed to empower the Lord Lieutenant to suppress any association which he might think dangerous to public peace or inconsistent with the due administration of the law. The members of the Opposition did not like the measure. They naturally regarded it as a grave interference with the liberty of the

The suppression of the Catholic Association.

Roebuck, vol. i. p. 116. *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 907. Sir E. May, in his work on Democracy in Europe, vol. ii. p. 461, treats Roman Catholic Emancipation as one of the triumphs of Democracy. With due deference to Sir E. May, Democracy had nothing to do with it. It was the triumph of the thinking few over the unthinking many.

subject. They distrusted the policy of conferring almost absolute power on the Lord Lieutenant. But though they were nearly unanimous in disliking the bill, they were almost unanimous in refraining from opposing it. In the first place, they were conciliated by the assurance that the measure was to be temporary; and in the next place, they were satisfied by the reflection that it would be nugatory. The Association had done its work; the concession of emancipation would inevitably lead to its dissolution; and the dissolution of the Association would leave the Lord Lieutenant nothing to suppress.[1] Liberal members might hesitate to pass a measure empowering a single officer of exalted rank to suppress an association which he might judge dangerous; but they could hardly hesitate to authorise this arrangement for a temporary period, during which there could be no object in maintaining any organisation for political purposes. It was worth while to pay some price for the great boon which ministers were preparing for Ireland, and "a measure of temporary coercion" was not too high a price to pay for "a measure of permanent conciliation." Animated by these feelings, the Opposition refrained from opposing the Suppression Bill, and the measure passed through all its stages with a rapidity which was almost unprecedented. Introduced into the House of Commons on the 10th of February, it was read a third time in the House of Lords exactly a fortnight afterwards.[2]

The Suppression Bill had now been passed. The introduction of the Relief Bill was fixed for Thursday, the 5th of March. Forty-eight hours before its introduction Peel received the king's orders to wait upon him. He went accordingly to Windsor, where the king was residing, with the Prime Minister and the Chancellor. The

The king withdraws his consent.

[1] "Pass a bill," said Anglesey, "for putting the Roman Catholics upon a footing of political equality with their Protestant brethren, and I will answer for it you will never hear again of the Catholic Association."—*Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 31.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xx. pp. 177, 519. See also, for the views of the Opposition, ibid., pp. 206, 291. For the proclamation suppressing the Association, see Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vii. p. 4.

king spoke to them of the pain with which he had given his assent to the measure, and of his desire to receive a more detailed explanation of it. Peel, being more familiar than his colleagues with its details, told the king that it was intended to repeal the declaration against transubstantiation, and to modify the oath of supremacy. The king affected the greatest surprise at this announcement. "You surely cannot intend to modify"—so he protested—"the ancient oath of supremacy?" Peel repeated the decision of the Cabinet, and the king thereupon declared that it was impossible for him to assent to the measure. What course did his ministers propose to take? Peel replied by tendering his own resignation, and by begging the king's permission to state on the morrow that unforeseen circumstances had prevented him from bringing forward the measure that he had announced, and that he was consequently no longer Secretary of State for the Home Department. Wellington and Lyndhurst returned the same answer as Peel. The king expressed regret at the circumstances which had necessitated their retirement, accepted their resignations, kissed them on both cheeks, and sent them away after a five hours' interview with the conviction that they were out of office.

The sudden change in the king's views had been due to the active intrigues of the Duke of Cumberland. Cumberland was the most unpopular of the king's brothers. With no deep religious convictions of his own, he became the self-constituted champion of the Church, and, from disliking Wellington, the intolerant opponent of the ministerial measure. Having constant access to the king, he was able to assail him with every argument which was calculated to make an impression on his narrow understanding. Cumberland had, however, miscalculated his own power. He had relied on the possibility of the Tories forming a Protestant Administration. An evening's reflection convinced the king that the formation of a Protestant Administration was impracticable, and that he had no alternative but to surrender at discretion. At a late hour of the day on which he had taken so touching a leave of his three obdurate counsellors he

The king again gives way.

wrote to Wellington and begged him to go on. Cumberland's intervention had done nothing but afford one more proof of the weak, vacillating character of his unfortunate brother.[1]

The vacillations in the king's mind were well known in political circles in London. The ministry, it was thought, was out; and the great measure of relief abandoned. Men meeting in the street asked one another what would happen; and the friends of religious freedom feared that the victory was already lost which they had fancied that they were on the eve of securing. The doubts which thus oppressed every one increased the interest felt in the debate. From an early hour on the Thursday morning the avenues to the House of Commons were thronged with an anxious crowd. The moment the doors were opened a rush was made to secure every available seat, while the lobbies were still full of people who had been unable to find room. Soon after six Peel rose. The first words of his speech dissipated any misgivings that the king still refused to give way. "I rise," he said, "as a minister of the king, and sustained by the just authority which belongs to that character, to vindicate the advice given to his Majesty by a united Cabinet."[2] Amidst the cheers which followed this declaration he proceeded to explain the causes which had led to his own change of opinion, and the principles of the measures which he had undertaken to introduce. The Whigs who listened to his statement were delighted to find that the minister who had the courage to give had the wisdom to give ungrudgingly. The Roman Catholic was excluded from exercising the delegated authority of the Crown as Vice-

Emancipation proposed in Parliament.

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 349. Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 332. Greville, vol. i. p. 182. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. p. 518. The crisis in the ministry had really begun in the previous week. The king on the Thursday was alarmingly violent with Peel; the Duke pacified him on the Friday. On the Sunday he sent for Lyndhurst, who could do nothing with him, and drove on through the night to Strathfieldsaye. The Duke took Windsor on his way to town on the Monday, and again settled matters; but on the Tuesday the king sent for his three ministers. These details will be found in Greville, and are corroborated by Palmerston, who was staying at Strathfieldsaye on the Sunday. The narrative in the text is confined to that portion of the crisis which Peel thought it alone necessary to relate.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 728. Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 350.

roy; he was incapacitated from holding the Chancellorship either in Great Britain or in Ireland; and he was disabled from presenting to any benefice or from exercising any influence in any ecclesiastical appointment. But, with these few exceptions, the relief which was given was complete. The Roman Catholic was placed, once for all, on an equality with his Protestant fellow-subject.

The boon was great; but, in one point, Ireland was required to pay for it. The Roman Catholics owed their emancipation to the change which had taken place in Peel's opinions, and this change had been partly attributable to the Clare election. Peel had never recovered from the shock which he had experienced on learning that the forty-shilling freeholders had rebelled in a body against their landlords and voted with the priests. "We must look"—so he argued on the 5th of March—"for real security in the regulation of the elective franchise of Ireland. It is in vain to deny or to conceal the truth in respect to that franchise. It was, until a late period, the instrument through which the landed aristocracy—the resident and absentee proprietor—maintained their local influence; through which property had its legitimate weight in the national representation. The landlord has been disarmed by the priest; the fear of spiritual denunciation has already severed in some cases, and will sever in others, every tie between the Protestant proprietor and the lower class of his Roman Catholic tenantry. That weapon, which he has forged with so much care, and which he has heretofore wielded with such success, has broken short in his hand." Actuated by these opinions, Peel proposed that the forty-shilling freeholders should be disfranchised, and that the qualification of an elector should be fixed at £10 instead of £2 a year.[1]

The disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders.

The great speech in which Peel explained his measures occupied four hours in delivery. The bursts of cheering with which it was continually greeted were heard far beyond the walls of the House in Westminster Hall. The Whigs,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 769.

delighted with the statement of the minister and with the liberality of his proposals, agreed, almost unanimously, to support both his measures, and were loud in applauding the courage of his conduct and the wisdom of his views. Sir Robert Inglis, with the honours of Oxford fresh upon him, ventured to reply to Peel. "The University of Oxford," it was remarked, "should have been there in a body to hear the member whom they" had "rejected and him whom they" had "chosen in his place." Murray, the Colonial Secretary, destroyed the little effect which Inglis's speech had produced, and increased the enthusiasm of the Whigs by the unexpected liberality of his language. The debate was adjourned soon after Murray's speech till the following evening; but the adjourned debate produced nothing except a decisive declaration from Brougham that he agreed to the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholder "as the price, as the high price, as the all but extravagant price, of this inestimable good. That price, to obtain that good, he for one would most willingly pay."[1] This decisive declaration deprived the debate of any further practical interest. The House noisily clamoured for a division, and listened impatiently to a speech in which Peel's younger brother, Jonathan, explained his reasons for differing from the ministry.[2] At three o'clock on Saturday morning the House divided. The ministry was in a majority of 348 votes to 160.[3] The friends of religious freedom had secured a decisive victory. The success of the ministerial measures was assured.

The debate and the victory.

The victory was a great one, but the ministry had not been able to command the votes of all its members in the division. Lord Lowther, eldest son of the great borough-owner, Lord Lonsdale, was Commissioner of Land Revenue. Lowther voted against his colleagues, and he carried all Lord Lonsdale's representatives with him. Wetherell was Attorney-General. He had been always distinguished for the strength

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 836.

[2] Ibid., p. 870. Mr. Jonathan Peel was better known afterwards as General Peel. He made a moderate speech, recommending a dissolution.

[3] Ibid., p. 892.

of his Protestant convictions. He had been selected, on Protestant grounds, to oppose Palmerston at Cambridge, and he had displaced Scarlett as Attorney-General on the formation of Wellington's ministry. Wetherell, like Lowther, voted in the minority. The supporters of the Government anxiously expected the retirement of these unruly spirits from the Administration. Their conduct seemed much less defensible than that of Huskisson in 1828, and it was expected that their resignations would follow their votes as a matter of course. It was commonly reported that Lowther had resigned. Day after day, however, passed without any notification of his resignation. Ministers forebore from increasing the difficulties of the situation by pushing their differences with their colleagues to extremities, and Lowther and Wetherell were permitted to retain office without sacrificing their convictions.[1] Wetherell probably owed his own immunity from removal to the Duke's consideration for Lord Lonsdale. It was no slight matter for a Prime Minister to quarrel with a nobleman whose nine members had gained him the title of "the Premier's cat-o'-nine-tails." Wetherell had no consideration for the Duke's forbearance. The second reading of the Relief Bill was fixed for the 17th of March, and he seized the opportunity for indulging in an uncompromising attack on his colleagues. "He had declined," he said, "to draw the bill now on the table of the House because, on looking to the oath which he had taken as Attorney-General, he thought that he should, by drawing that bill, be abjuring his duty and be drawing the death-warrant of the Protestant Church." "Was he, then, to blame for refusing to do that which a more eminent adviser of the Crown, only two years ago, declared he would not consent to do? Was he, then, to be twitted, taunted, and attacked? He cared little for being attacked, whether from the right or from the left. Let the attack come from whence it might, he was ready to meet it. He dared them to attack him. He had no speech to eat up. He had no apostasy to explain. He had no paltry subterfuge

Wetherell's attack upon the ministry.

[1] Greville, vol. i. pp. 185, 187.

to resort to. He had not to say a thing was black one day and white another. He was not in one year a Protestant Master of the Rolls and in the next a Catholic Lord Chancellor. He would rather remain where he was, the humble member for Plympton, than be guilty of such contradiction, such unexplainable conversion, such miserable, such contemptible apostasy."[1]

Wetherell's brutal violence, to quote the epithets applied to his language at the time,[2] had not even the justification of truth. He had not declined to draw the bill from any fear of abjuring himself. He had drawn the measure for the suppression of the Association, though he had been told that it was the prelude of the Relief Bill, and had made no remonstrance. He had continued a member of the Government till the 23rd of February without uttering a single word of warning to any of his colleagues; and, though he had declined to draw the bill on that day, he had not referred in any way to the obligations imposed upon him by his oath.[3] He had kept his temper in the closet, and had reserved his violence for the House. The unseemly attack which he made on his colleagues did not make any material impression on the division. The second reading of the bill was carried by 353 votes to 173.[4] But the size of the ministerial majority could not obliterate the Attorney-General's speech. The anti-Catholic papers described it as the finest oration ever delivered in the House of Commons. Less partial critics declared that the orator was drunk when he made it.[5] Drunk or sober, he had disqualified himself for office. The Duke was glad to use the speech as a pretext for distinguishing between Wetherell and the Lowthers, and of ridding himself of the Attorney-General without quarrel-

He is dismissed from the Attorney-Generalship.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xx. pp. 1257, 1263.

[2] Greville, vol. i. p. 191: "The Attorney-General was violent and brutal."

[3] *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 1586.

[4] Ibid., p. 1290.

[5] Greville, vol. i. p. 194. It was on this occasion that the Speaker said of Wetherell, "The only lucid interval he had was that between his waistcoat and his breeches."—Ibid.

ling with Lord Lonsdale.[1] Within ten days from his famous philippic Wetherell was dismissed from his office. He was able to oppose the obnoxious measure, in its last stages, as a private member.

The Attorney-General had been dismissed, but his dismissal afforded a new proof of the embarrassments of the Government. Tindal was Solicitor-General. His own abilities and long usage designated him as Wetherell's successor. Tindal, however, was member for the University of Cambridge. With the experiences of the Oxford election fresh in their minds, the ministry did not venture on risking a second contest in the sister University. Best, the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, was made a peer, and persuaded to retire. Tindal was promoted to his office; Scarlett, who had been dismissed from his Attorney-Generalship on the formation of the Wellington Ministry, was restored to his old post; and Sugden, who from a humble origin had already raised himself to a high position at the Bar, was made Solicitor-General. Sugden was one of the four members for Weymouth. Scarlett was member for Peterborough; and ministers postponed their appointment till the close of the session, in order that they might avoid the inconvenience of a single unnecessary election during its continuance. They wisely forebore from risking their majority in the House by any avoidable display of their weakness in the constituencies.

Scarlett and Sugden made law officers.

The delay in filling up the vacancy which Wetherell's removal had created proved the reluctance of the Government to encounter any isolated election. Nothing but the extreme indecency of the Attorney-General's language would have induced Wellington to part with his principal law officer. The Duke's forbearance, however, did not mitigate the storm of abuse with which his ministry was assailed. His principal assailant was the Earl of Winchilsea,

Lord Winchilsea.

[1] *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 328. Palmerston humorously says that Nature had made the distinction for the Duke between Wetherell and the Lowthers, "since she had made it out of the question that the said Lowthers should speak." See also Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. p. 547.

a Tory peer, whose connection with Kent had made him one of the chief speakers at the Pennenden meeting. Winchilsea, during the whole session, had been in a condition of indescribable excitement. He had entirely forgotten the ordinary courtesies of political warfare. On the first evening on which the House of Lords sat he declared that the conduct of ministers was "a gross violation of political rectitude and consistency."[1] He published immediately afterwards an address to the Protestants of Great Britain, in which he told them that "the great body of your degenerate senators are prepared to sacrifice, at the shrine of treason and rebellion, that Constitution for which our ancestors so nobly fought and died."[2] The furious abuse of an exasperated nobleman had no effect on the progress of the measures of the Government. Winchilsea's failure to arrest them increased his anger. A few years before, Brougham's exertions had been instrumental in forming the University of London. In 1828 some friends of the Church of England suggested the institution of the King's College. Winchilsea was one of those who had in the first instance joined the new institution. In his blind rage against Wellington he persuaded himself that the scheme was a fraud. "I was one of those," he wrote to the secretary, "who at first thought the proposed plan might be practicable, and prove an antidote to the principles of the London University. . . . Late political events have convinced me that the whole transaction was intended as a blind to the Protestant and High Church party; that the noble Duke, who had, for some time previous to that period, determined upon breaking in upon the Constitution of 1688, might the more effectually, under the cloak of some outward show of zeal for the Protestant religion, carry on his insidious designs for the infringement of our liberties and the introduction of Popery into every department of the State."[3]

His letter respecting King's College.

This letter, written on the 14th, was published in the *Standard* of the 16th of March. Wellington, on seeing it,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 14. [2] Ibid., p. 233.
[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1829, Chron., p. 58. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. p. 526.

immediately wrote and asked if it were genuine. Winchilsea avowed that he was the author of it, and the Duke sent Hardinge to the writer demanding an apology. Winchilsea refused to apologise; and the Duke then demanded that satisfaction "which a gentleman has a right to require, and which a gentleman never refuses to give." Early on the morning of Saturday, the 21st of March, the two men—one the Prime Minister of England, the other the hot-headed Earl—met in Battersea Fields. Hardinge acted as second to the Duke, Lord Falmouth as second to Winchilsea. The duellists were placed at fifteen paces from each other. The Duke fired first, and without effect. Winchilsea fired in the air. Immediately afterwards he pulled a paper out of his pocket declaring his regret at having unadvisedly published an opinion charging the Duke with disgraceful and criminal motives. The affair thus terminated; and the Duke, touching his hat, and wishing every one good morning, got on his horse and rode away.[1]

His duel with the Duke of Wellington.

The news of the duel created astonishment. More than thirty years had passed since a Prime Minister of England had been engaged in a duel. Nearly twenty years had passed since Canning had fought Castlereagh. On two subsequent occasions, indeed, Canning's hasty temperament had involved him in disputes which had nearly led to similar encounters. But, on one of them, Burdett had explained away his offensive language. On the other, the authority of the Speaker had been invoked to part Canning from Brougham. Duelling had, of late years, been going out of fashion, and no one contemplated the possibility of its revival by a Prime Minister. From the first, indeed, Winchilsea's letter had only provoked a laugh against the writer. "It is a very clever letter," said George IV.; "much the wisest thing he ever did. He has got back his money. I wish I could find some such pretext to get back mine."[2] The world, like the king, had laughed at Winchilsea.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1829, Chron., pp. 59–63. Greville, vol. i. p. 192. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. pp. 531–545.

[2] Greville, vol. i. p. 193.

They thought that the Prime Minister might have joined in the laugh. But the moment it was known that the duel had been fought, the public to a man blamed the writer whose letter had provoked it. Winchilsea's single act of grace, in firing in the air, did not save him from censure. Opinion was divided on the propriety of the Duke's conduct. He was the one man in England, so many thought, who might have ventured on avoiding a combat. He had freely risked his life in the pursuit after Waterloo, gallantly replying to those who had advised him to desist from it, "Let them fire away; the battle is won, and my life is of no value now."[1] But the new battle, in which he was engaged in 1829, was not won. The cause of religious freedom depended on his existence—

> "Quærat certamen, cui nil, nisi vita, superstes,
> Subdita cui cedit Roma, cavere meum est."[2]

The Duke cared very little about these criticisms. The duel, in his view, was an inseparable incident from the struggle in which he was engaged. "It was as necessary to undertake it," he wrote, "and to carry it out to the extremity to which I did carry it, as it was to do everything else which I did to attain the object which I had in view. I was living in an atmosphere of calumny. I could do nothing that was not misrepresented, as having some bad purpose in view. If my physician called upon me, it was for treasonable purposes. If I said a word, whether in Parliament or elsewhere, it was misrepresented for the purpose of fixing upon me some gross delusion or falsehood. . . . The courts of justice were shut, and not to open till May. I knew that the bill must pass or be lost before the 15th of April. In this state of things Lord Winchilsea published his furious letter. I immediately perceived the advantage it gave me; and I determined to act upon it in such a tone as would certainly put me in the right. Not only was I successful in the execution of my project, but the project itself produced the effect

The Duke's excuse for his conduct.

[1] The anecdote will be found in Ward's correspondence with the Bishop of Llandaff, p. 134.

[2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 611, where the quotation is thus applied.

which I looked for and intended it should produce. The atmosphere of calumny, in which I had been for some time living, cleared away. Men were ashamed of repeating what had been told to them. I am afraid that the event itself shocked many good men; but I am certain that the public interests at the moment required that I should do what I did."[1]

Two days after the duel the House of Commons resolved itself into committee on the Relief Bill. An attempt was made to exclude Roman Catholics from sitting in Parliament, but was defeated. On Friday, the 27th of March, the bill was reported; and on Monday, the 30th of March, it was read a third time and passed. The Government was supported, at every stage of the bill, by overwhelming majorities. The House, on the 6th of March, agreed to resolve itself into a committee on the Roman Catholic claims by 348 votes to 160; the second reading of the Relief Bill was carried, on the 18th of March, by 353 votes to 173; the bill was passed by 320 votes to 142.[2] It was naturally expected that the decisive majorities by which the measure had been supported in the Commons would have their due influence in the Lords, and these expectations were not disappointed. Wellington introduced the Relief Bill in the House of Lords on the 31st of March. The first reading was at once agreed to; and the second reading was fixed for the 2nd of April. The debate which then took place extended over three nights, and the division did not occur till the morning of Sunday, the 5th of April. No one quite knew what the numbers in the division would be. Only a week before it occurred, the king was hoping almost against hope that the measure might be defeated. It was impossible to predict how some of the peers would vote. Every order of the Peerage was divided against itself. The Duke of Clarence, heir-presumptive to the throne, was in favour of the measure; the Duke of Cumberland, his

The Relief Bill carried,

1 Buckingham's *Memoirs of George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 397. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. p. 585.

2 *Hansard*, vol. xx. pp. 892, 1290, 1633.

next brother, opposed to it. The Primate of England led the Opposition. Lloyd, Bishop of Oxford, replied to the Primate. The Archbishop of Armagh voted with his brother of Canterbury; the Bishops of Derry and Kildare, the only other Irish prelates in the division, voted against him. Ten bishops supported the ministry. Nineteen prelates voted against them. When divisions of this character were to be found on the Episcopal Bench, it was difficult to foresee the result of the debate. The ministry would have been satisfied with a majority of fifty. The majority was more than twice as large. The second reading was carried by 217 votes to 112. The most sanguine partisan had not expected so decisive a victory.[1]

The majority virtually settled the matter. The staunchest Protestant saw that he had nothing to hope from the House of Lords. In the succeeding week the bill was passed rapidly through committee; and on Friday, the 13th of April, its third reading was carried by 213 votes to 109.[2] Eldon made one last speech for the cause which he had so long and so stubbornly defended. It was said that the Duke of Cumberland intended to support Eldon, and to threaten to quit the country, never to return to it, if the king should give his assent to the bill. It was feared, however, that such a declaration would produce so general a cheer that the Duke thought better of his purpose.[3] Nothing would have so effectually reconciled the people to the measure as the knowledge that it would have severed them for ever from the Duke of Cumberland. Stout Tories, unable to rely on the Duke of Cumberland, placed their hopes on the king. It was known that George IV. had been closeted on two recent occasions with Eldon; that he had complained of the position into which he had been forced by his ministers; and that Eldon thought that he would postpone giving his assent to the measure.[4] Eldon little understood the nature of his master. George IV. was quite ready to be rude to the peers and bishops who had voted against

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 394. Greville, vol. i. pp. 197, 199.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 694.
[3] Buckingham's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 393.
[4] Eldon, vol. iii. p. 87.

his wishes, and to display his rudeness to them in his own house, but he was not ready to undertake an impracticable contest for the sake of the Church. The House of Lords passed the Relief Bill on the Friday. On the Saturday the Duke, as a matter of ordinary course, sent the commission down to Windsor for the king's approval; and, equally as a matter of course, George IV. returned it approved on the Monday. "After all I had heard in my visits," wrote Eldon, "not a day's delay! God bless us, and his Church!"[1]

and receives the royal assent.

The bill disfranchising the forty-shilling freeholders made equal progress. The Opposition did not like it; some of them ventured on opposing it; but the great majority of them accepted the measure as the inevitable price which they had to pay for the Relief Bill. No one put the freeholders' case better than Anglesey. "These freeholders," he said, "were first created for electioneering purposes. As long as they allowed themselves to be driven to the hustings like sheep to the shambles, without a will of their own, all was well: not a murmur was heard. But the moment these poor people found out the value of their tenure, the moment they exerted their power constitutionally, that instant they are swept out of political existence."[2] Anglesey's reasoning may have convinced many peers that the ministerial measure was a harsh one, but his arguments did not probably affect a single vote. The bill disfranchising the freeholders had passed through all its stages in the House of Commons, side by side with the Relief Bill, during March. It was read a second time in the House of Lords, by 139 votes to 17, on the 6th of April. Four days afterwards it was read a third time and passed.[3]

The forty-shilling freeholders.

Parliament separated for its Easter holiday on the 16th of April; it reassembled on the 28th. The House of Lords presented a scene of unusual gaiety. For the first time since the Revolution, Roman Catholic peers were enabled to take their seats in the assembly. It was known that the Duke of Norfolk

[1] Eldon, vol. iii. p. 87; Greville, vol. i. p. 204; and Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. p. 580. [2] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 400. [3] Ibid., pp. 441, 694.

intended to avail himself of his privilege; and many ladies, whose political opinions enabled them to sympathise with the Roman Catholics, were in attendance to witness a scene which was historical. Three Roman Catholic peers, the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Clifford, and Lord Dormer, took the oaths prescribed by the Relief Bill on the 28th of April. Three nights afterwards, Lord Stafford, Lord Petre, and Lord Stourton took their seats.[1] The full consequences of the great measure of the year were already visible in the House of Lords. Six gentlemen of ancient lineage, vast possessions, and undoubted character had been added to that assembly. A considerable time elapsed before the House of Commons was subjected to a similar contagion. The Relief Bill had declared that the new oath was to be taken by "any person professing the Roman Catholic religion who shall after the commencement of this Act be returned as a member of the House of Commons." It had, therefore, impliedly excluded the newly-elected member for Clare. The impolicy of such an exclusion seemed manifest to most people. The last thing which the ministry should have desired was a fresh election in Ireland, and a refusal to allow O'Connell to take his seat must necessarily lead to a fresh election in Clare. If O'Connell were the agitator which the Tories believed him to be, he would derive fresh powers of mischief from the refusal. The necessity of appealing to his Irish constituents would almost force him into a career of fresh agitation. The petty pique, moreover, which refused to allow the great Catholic leader to share in the victory which he had won for the Roman Catholics, robbed the concession, which the ministry and Parliament had decided on making, of half its grace. The decision, in fact, seemed so unaccountable that a few Liberal members desired to propose an amendment to the Relief Bill, and to make the new oath applicable to O'Connell. O'Connell had the good taste and moderation to beg that the amendment might not be moved, and that the success of the great measure might not be put in jeopardy by the discussion of his own case.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1829, Chron., p. 82.

His forbearance saved the ministry from a damaging debate, and the Relief Bill was passed in its original form.[1]

O'Connell arrived in London on the 8th of April. People stared at him as if he were a wild man: they found that there was "nothing remarkable in his manner, appearance, or conversation;" that he was "lively, well-bred, and at his ease." The Irishmen could not have sent a better representative. A man who was at once a gentleman, a landlord, a good sportsman, a clever lawyer, a ready speaker, and an excellent talker was the very person to make a favourable impression on the mixed society of the metropolis.[2] He attended the Levée at the end of April, and behaved like a gentleman—which it was more than it was possible to say of his sovereign on the same occasion[3]—and he quietly waited till the 15th of May without making any effort to claim the seat to which he was, at any rate, morally entitled. In the meanwhile a Roman Catholic had taken his seat in the House of Commons. The Duke of Norfolk had great influence in Horsham; and the Duke desired, after the passage of the Relief Bill, to obtain a seat for his eldest son, Lord Surrey. Hurst, one of the members for the borough, retired, and Lord Surrey was duly elected in his place.[4] Norfolk had been the first Roman Catholic peer admitted to one House, Surrey was the first Roman Catholic commoner admitted to the other. After Surrey's admission, on the 15th of May, O'Connell himself attended at the House, and applied to be sworn. The gallery and the lobby were full of people anxious to learn the result of the unusual application. O'Connell was introduced by Lord Duncannon, the member for Kilkenny, and by Lord Ebrington, the eldest son of Lord Fortescue, the member for Tavistock. The clerk at the table tendered him the oaths of allegiance, supremacy, and abjuration. O'Connell expressed his readiness to take the oaths of allegiance and

O'Connell claims his seat for Clare.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 398. Greville, vol. i. p. 196.

[2] Daunt's recollections of O'Connell give a good insight into his character. Daunt is a bad imitator of Boswell.

[3] Eldon, vol. iii. p. 88. Greville, vol. i. p. 206.

[4] *Ann. Reg.*, 1829, Chron., p. 207.

abjuration, but declined to take the oath of supremacy, claiming, however, to be allowed to take the oath set forth in the Relief Act. The Speaker, ruling that the new Act was not applicable to a member elected before it became law, desired him to withdraw. Brougham immediately moved that he "be called back and heard at the table." Peel, declaring that the point was a new one, pressed for an adjournment. Charles Wynn, supporting Brougham, contended that O'Connell was entitled to be heard either at the table or at the bar. The debate was ultimately adjourned till the following Monday, the 18th of May, when Peel himself, accepting the compromise which Wynn had suggested, moved that O'Connell "be heard, by himself, his counsel, or his agents, at the bar." The House concurred with its leader, and O'Connell was immediately called in.

His speech at the bar of the House.

No one, either in Great Britain or Ireland, enjoyed a higher reputation for popular oratory than the great Irish agitator. But popular oratory does not necessarily qualify a speaker for success in the House of Commons. The arts which please a mob are displeasing to an educated assembly; and it was, therefore, generally thought that O'Connell would fail in Parliament. The expectations and hopes of his friends and opponents were signally disappointed. "His whole demeanour was a happy mixture of dignity, respect, and ease." He addressed himself to the reason, and not to the passions, of his audience. He surprised the House, moreover, by the unexpected strength of his argument. The Act of Union had required that, until the Parliament of the United Kingdom should otherwise provide, every member of the House of Commons should take the oaths and subscribe the declaration required by law. The Act of Union had, however, imposed no penalty on the member who omitted to comply with this provision, and Parliament had "otherwise" provided by passing the Relief Bill. The spirit of the Relief Bill, O'Connell contended, was in favour of his claim; and, though the words of one of the sections of that Act apparently excluded a Roman Catholic elected

before it had become law, another section expressly conceded to Roman Catholics the right to hold, exercise, and enjoy all civil and military offices, and to exercise any other franchise or civil right on taking the oath prescribed in the Relief Bill. O'Connell then contended that there was nothing in the Act of Union which prevented his taking his seat, and that the spirit of the Relief Bill favoured his claim. His argument was not unanswerable. Scarlett and other lawyers succeeded in showing that the Act which Parliament had just passed could not fairly bear the construction which O'Connell had put upon it; and that the House had no alternative but to enforce the law and exclude the great agitator from his seat. Even, however, the lawyers in the House were not unanimous in this view; while the Whigs were agreed in thinking that a measure avowedly of relief ought to receive the most liberal interpretation possible. The friends of Grenville and the friends of Huskisson adopted the same view, and opposed the ministry in the subsequent division. The Tories, however, rallied in support of the Government and the letter of the law, and declined to yield to O'Connell's arguments. O'Connell refused to take the oath of supremacy, as "it contained one proposition which he knew to be false, and another proposition which he believed to be untrue;" and the House, adhering to its decision, ordered the Speaker to make out a new writ for Clare.[1]

The new election for Clare.

An act of relief had been robbed of half its grace by the decision. The policy of temporarily refusing O'Connell the fruits of his victory was so miserable, that men refused to believe that the ministry had originated it. The exclusion was universally set down as the work of the king;[2] and the Government was absolved from the unpopularity attending it. The House of Commons had, perhaps, never arrived at a more unfortunate decision. All that they had done was to exclude O'Connell from taking his seat during the few weeks which the session of 1829 had still

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. pp. 1400, 1458, 1460, 1531.
[2] Greville, vol. i. p. 208.

to run. The price which they had to pay for his temporary exclusion was enormous. Its inevitable consequence was a fresh election for Clare. A fresh election for Clare involved a new triumph for O'Connell and fresh difficulties for the British Government. The Roman Catholic Association had been suppressed. O'Connell's election was made the excuse for "an aggregate meeting of Catholics." The aggregate meeting, which was nothing but a revival of the Association under another name, took upon itself to vote £5000 of the Catholic rent for the purposes of the election. No candidate dared to oppose the successful agitator who had emancipated the Roman Catholics of Ireland; and O'Connell went from village to village addressing the masses who thronged from all sides to hear him. His own disposition, the applause of the populace, the excitement of his immediate friends, would have made it impossible for him under such circumstances to have satisfied himself with thankfulness for the past. The petty spite with which he had been personally treated absolved him from every feeling of gratitude. He proceeded from meeting to meeting, not to enlarge on the victory which had been won, but to enrol support for a new campaign. He undertook to restore the franchise to the forty-shilling freeholders. He undertook the repeal of the Union.[1]

Fresh disturbances in Ireland.

Thus Parliament, by excluding O'Connell from the House of Commons for a few weeks in the summer of 1829, had to deal with a fresh agitation, eminently calculated to influence the excitable temperament of the Irish. It so happened that various circumstances, with which O'Connell had no direct connection, disposed the Irish to riot and disorder in the summer of 1829. A period of dull trade had diminished the demand for Irish labour; and large masses of the population were either without work or eking out a miserable subsistence on the scantiest wages. The poorer classes, moreover, had gained little or nothing from the great measure of relief which had been just passed. The Roman Catholic cottier had been deprived of his vote; the Protestant

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1829, Hist., p. 125.

had been deprived of his supremacy. The Protestants, irritated at the concessions of the ministry, resolved on celebrating the 12th of July with the usual rejoicings. The Roman Catholics, elated by their recent victory, decided on stopping the celebrations. Protestant and Catholic seized such weapons as they could find to enforce their respective determinations. Men with weapons in their hands soon find opportunities for using them. An Orange procession in Armagh was attacked by the Roman Catholics, and ten men were killed before the battle ceased. In Fermanagh the Roman Catholics, after defeating a body of Orangemen who had the temerity to interfere with them, encamped on some high land and drew reinforcements from the neighbouring counties of Cavan and Leitrim. The condition of Munster was almost as serious. A pitched battle, in which one Protestant was killed and seven were wounded, took place in Clare. The magistrates of Tipperary declared their inability to preserve the peace, and called on Government for the renewal of the Insurrection Act. Nothing but the activity of the military and the police prevented the commencement of civil war. Protestants guilty of killing Roman Catholics were acquitted, as a matter of course, by Protestant juries. Disorder and lawlessness existed from one end of Ireland to the other.[1]

In ordinary circumstances the disturbed state of Ireland would have occupied the attention of every British statesman.

Distress in Great Britain.

In 1829 a danger nearer home made the condition of Ireland appear of comparatively small importance. Great Britain had never recovered from the effects of the crisis of 1825. All classes of the population had suffered from it. Trade had been dull; manufacturing operations had been discouraged; and the rate of wages had been reduced. The agriculturists had participated in the universal distress. In March 1828 Knatchbull, the member for Kent, told Lord Colchester that all the farmers in the county were insolvent.[2] A bad season increased the difficulty. Every one

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1829, Hist., p. 129; and Chron., pp. 123, 135, 144, 156.
[2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 552.

was retrenching his expenditure; and economies which were almost universally practised naturally discouraged manufacturing operations. The manufacturers found it necessary to close their business or to lower the wages they were paying. The rate of wages in some trades fell to a pitiably low sum. In April 1829 the silk weavers of Somersetshire were dragging "on a miserable existence on two shillings and sixpence a week; just enough," so it was added, to give them "salt and potatoes."[1] It was, perhaps, natural that the silk weavers should suffer especially from the state of things around them. Silk was one of the first articles which a person bent on economy could dispense with. It was not necessary for any woman to wear a silk gown; and a farmer who told his landlord that he was insolvent was not likely to buy a silk dress for his wife to wear on Sunday. Immediately after the period at which prosperity had encouraged and legislation had promoted the silk trade, the demand for silk goods fell off. The manufacturers of Spitalfields, of Rochdale, and of Taunton found their business no longer profitable, and were compelled to reduce the wages of their workpeople.

Over-production in 1825, a diminution in the demand for silk in 1828, accounted for the stagnant condition of the silk trade. Manufacturers and working men, however, suffering from the effects of the crisis, were not likely to attribute it to so simple a cause as the over-production of their own looms or the poverty of their usual customers. Distress had followed Huskisson's legislation, and the destruction of the silk trade was almost everywhere ascribed to the novel commercial policy of the Government. The French, it was insisted, were underselling us in our own markets, and nothing but an immediate return to the old system of protection could save the British manufacturer from ruin and the British artisan from the poorhouse. Fyler, one of the members for Coventry, a borough in which more than four thousand persons were out of work, brought the subject before the House of Commons on the

The Protectionists ascribe the distress of the country to Huskisson's policy.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 596.

13th of April, and pressed for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the state of the silk trade. He avowed his desire to return to the old system of protection which Huskisson had abandoned. The Protectionists mustered in Fyler's support with unusual confidence. Huskisson was no longer in office; Wellington had never shown any zeal for free trade; and Fitzgerald, the new President of the Board of Trade, had little or no acquaintance with commercial subjects. Every condition, therefore, seemed to be favourable to an onslaught on Huskisson's system. Unfortunately for the Protectionists, Fitzgerald, though he had entered his office without any definite opinions on commercial subjects, had "by great diligence and application"[1] mastered the principles on which Huskisson had acted, and convinced himself of their propriety. He rose immediately after Fyler's motion had been seconded, but he rose to deprecate its adoption. The success of the motion would confirm the opinion, which was unluckily prevalent, that Parliament was contemplating some modification in its policy, and would, therefore, increase the uncertainty into which the trade had already been thrown. For his part, he was convinced that excessive duties only held out irresistible temptations to the smuggler, and that the British manufacturer in reality required protection against the contraband, and not against the legitimate, trade. Instead of increasing the duties, therefore, in accordance with the wish of the manufacturers, he proposed to reduce them, and thus inflict one more blow on the contraband trade.[2]

Riots in the manufacturing districts.

Fitzgerald's speech made the impression on the weavers which Balaam's famous prediction produced on Balak. They had relied on him to curse Huskisson's policy, and he had blessed it. They had besought him to raise the duties on foreign silks, and he had promised to reduce them. Four thousand looms were already idle in Coventry. A manufacturer declared that, if Fitzgerald's pro-

[1] Greville, vol. i. p. 261.

[2] The debate, which will be found in *Hansard*, vol. xxi. pp. 744–867. extended over two nights.

posal were carried into effect, he would throw two hundred others out of work. A meeting was held at Macclesfield on the 23rd of April to petition Parliament against Fitzgerald's bill. The starving operatives who attended it were excited by the inflammatory language which was addressed to them. The largest manufacturer in the town unfortunately announced a further reduction in the rate of wages. The announcement, made to men whose passions were already aroused, produced mischievous consequences. On Monday, the 27th of April, a mob of men and boys assembled in the market-place and commenced destroying the factory of the obnoxious manufacturer. On the same day the weavers of Rochdale broke into a few factories, in which some workmen who had transgressed the rules of their union were employed, destroyed the shuttles, and beat the men who were at work. Towards the end of the month Manchester and other places were the scene of similar disturbances. In May riots broke out in the metropolis, and the weavers of Bethnal Green resorted to deplorable acts of violence. Ten years had passed since England had been the theatre of so much disorder.

These disturbances were unfortunately capable of an easy explanation. The silk weavers were suffering from a distress which it was almost impossible to exaggerate. "A man came yesterday from Bethnal Green with an account of that district," wrote Greville, a few months afterwards. "They are all weavers, forming a sort of separate community; there they are born; there they live and labour; and there they die. They neither migrate nor change their occupation; they can do nothing else. They have increased in a ratio at variance with any principles of population, having nearly tripled in twenty years—from 22,000 to 64,000. They are for the most part out of employment, and can get none; 1100 are crammed into the poor-house, five or six in a bed; 6000 receive parochial relief. The parish is in debt; every day adds to the number of paupers and diminishes that of ratepayers. These are principally shopkeepers, who are beggared by the rates. The district is in a state of insolvency

The state of Bethnal Green.

and hopeless poverty, yet they multiply; and, while the people look squalid and dejected, as if borne down by wretchedness and destitution, the children thrive and are healthy."[1] There was no great difficulty in producing disturbances amongst a population afflicted with the misery which oppressed the weavers of Bethnal Green. For a moment the manufacturers hoped that the occurrence of disorder would induce the ministry to withdraw their proposal. Disturbances had the contrary effect. "The interests of the manufacturers, the interests of the workmen themselves, and the public tranquillity," said Peel, "called for the immediate passing of the bill. The outrages which had lately taken place were, he knew, perpetrated for the purpose of intimidating the legislature against agreeing to this measure; and he was convinced that every day it was delayed would add to the number of these outrages." The House did not venture to resist an appeal thus solemnly made to it. Notwithstanding the opposition of the manufacturers, Fitzgerald's bill was passed through its remaining stages and became law.[2]

The distress of the labouring classes.

Free trade had won a new victory; but free trade was powerless to remove the distress which was afflicting almost every class of the community. A bad harvest aggravated the condition of the agricultural classes, and added one more element of evil to the general suffering. "I saw a friend who had recently returned from one of the largest districts in the country," said a member of Parliament in February 1830, who told us "both masters and workmen were fast coming down to despair. I know that labourers perform most painful works, and that, after fourteen hours of hard and constant labour, they can only earn to maintain themselves a few shillings, utterly insufficient. The retail dealers are sinking into distress for want of customers, and are unable to pay rates, rent, or taxes, and trade is altogether unprofitable. Wretchedness, ruin, and misery swallow

[1] Greville, vol. ii. p. 261.

[2] 10th George IV., c. 23. Peel's declaration is in *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 1161.

up all in their vortex. Every week in the Gazette is a long list of bankrupts and a longer list of declared insolvents." "In one district of the county of Warwick," said Fyler, a few days afterwards, "there was a parish containing a mixture of manufacturers and agriculturists. The population amounted to 7100 persons. Of these, there were two thousand receiving parochial relief, 2100 not receiving relief, but not able to contribute anything to the rates, the whole weight of which was borne by five hundred heads of families, the representatives of the other inhabitants." "A very large portion of the working classes," said a third member, "were approaching to starvation. They wanted food and clothing; the best workmen could not find employment, or were obliged to apply to charitable distributions of food to eke out their existence. The large farmer was reduced to a small farmer, the small farmer was becoming a labourer, and the labourer was becoming a pauper."[1] In the Vale of Aylesbury, one of the richest agricultural districts in England, the poor rates amounted to thirty shillings an acre. In the parish of Mereworth the rates reached £40 of the whole rental; and out of 1900 persons residing in a single parish in Somersetshire there were a thousand paupers. In Barnsley the wages of the working classes averaged only twenty pence a week. In Sussex the labourers were employed on the roads at fourpence and threepence a day. In Huddersfield the people did not on an average earn more than twopence daily. Labour was so cheap and so abundant that men were employed to do the work of horses and oxen. In Hampshire and Cheshire peasants could be frequently seen harnessed to waggons, "degraded to the labour of brutes." In Somersetshire the Bishop of Bath and Wells declared that he had beheld numbers of his fellow-men "yoked together like oxen and engaged in drawing coals from the pits in the neighbourhood." Men, reduced to the utmost distress, gladly performed the vilest and the hardest labour for the sake of a miserable wage.[2]

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. pp. 88, 158, 234.
[2] Ibid., pp. 932, 959, 961, 996, 1003.

All classes of the community were oppressed with the terrible distress which they were either experiencing themselves or witnessing around them. When Parliament met on the 4th of February 1830, the country gentlemen were longing to discover some means for alleviating the misery which was shocking to their feelings, and which their diminished rent-rolls disabled them from relieving. They expected that the speech from the throne would reflect their own feelings. The speech from the throne declared that "his Majesty laments that, notwithstanding the indication of active commerce, distress should prevail among the agricultural and manufacturing classes in some parts of the United Kingdom. It would be most gratifying to the paternal feelings of his Majesty to be enabled to propose measures calculated to relieve the difficulties of any portion of his subjects, and at the same time compatible with the general and permanent interests of his people. It is from a deep solicitude for those interests that his Majesty is impressed with the necessity of acting with extreme caution in reference to this important subject. His Majesty feels assured that you will concur with him in assigning due weight to the effect of unfavourable seasons, and to the operation of other causes which are beyond the reach of legislative control or remedy. Above all, his Majesty is convinced that no pressure of temporary difficulty will induce you to relax the determination which you have uniformly manifested to maintain inviolate the public credit, and thus to uphold the high character and the permanent welfare of the country."

The speech from the throne in 1830,

These cold and guarded phrases created the greatest sensation in Parliament. The king had declared the distress to be partial. The country gentlemen, arriving one after another, each with heartrending accounts from his own neighbourhood, were convinced that it was general. The king had implied that it was due to unfortunate seasons; the country gentlemen were unanimous in ascribing it to the commercial legislation of the Government. The king had recommended caution in dealing with

which increases the unpopularity of the Ministry.

it; the country gentlemen had persuaded themselves that instant action was necessary. The dispassionate advice of the speech seemed, therefore, tame and unwise to their excited feelings. The Administration, moreover, was everywhere regarded as a Tory Government with Whig opinions. The ministry, which had been placed in office to maintain the connection between Church and State, had repealed the Test Act and emancipated the Roman Catholics; and extreme Tories, reflecting on these events, thought themselves absolved from any further allegiance to Wellington and Peel. The aspect of the House of Commons on the first night of the session did not diminish the irritation of the country gentlemen. The address was moved by Lord Darlington. Lord Darlington was the eldest son of Lord Cleveland. Cleveland had all his life been a zealous Whig; he had brought Brougham into Parliament for Winchelsea; Darlington had for seventeen years been a silent supporter of the Opposition. Cleveland, however, considered that the progress of time had made such great changes both in men and measures that he was bound to pass over to the ministerial ranks. Cleveland's conduct was annoying to the Whigs, but it could not be particularly satisfactory to the Tories. They might well consider whether the change in men and measures which had induced Cleveland to pass over to the Government did not equally compel them to withdraw their support from it.

First attacks on the Government.

The irritation of the Tories was visible at the opening of the session. Years had passed since an amendment had been proposed to the address. It had always been voted in the form in which the ministry had worded it, and it had always re-echoed the speech from the throne. For the first time since the conclusion of the war, the debate on the address was made the pretext for an attack upon the Government. In the House of Lords, Lord Stanhope, a Tory peer, strongly opposed to the resumption of cash payments and to Huskisson's commercial policy, declared that "a speech more inept and more inappropriate was never delivered from the throne," and moved an amendment to

the address. Opposition peers, thinking that Lord Stanhope's amendment pointed to a return to a paper currency, passed over to the Government, and Stanhope was defeated by a large majority.[1] His amendment, however, enabled the extreme Tories to display their hostility towards the ministry.

A much more serious attack was made in the House of Commons. Knatchbull, the member for Kent, a country gentleman of Tory views, proposed an amendment, lamenting the distress, declaring it to be general, and assuring his Majesty that the time of the House should be employed to alleviate and remove it. The amendment was very nearly proving fatal to the Wellington Ministry. All the extreme Tories supported Knatchbull. Brougham, Althorp, and the moderate Whigs voted against the Government. Huskisson and the remnant of Canning's friends ranged themselves on the same side. O'Connell, who made his first speech on the occasion, supported the amendment. The ministerial whips thought that the ministry would be in a minority; and the Government was only saved from defeat by the sudden advent of an unexpected assistance. Lord Howick, the eldest son of Lord Grey, doubted the expediency of turning out Wellington.[2] He had never forgiven Brougham for supporting Canning in 1827;[3] he had no confidence in Huskisson; and he thought that the services which the Duke had rendered in the previous year entitled him to a fair trial. He rose towards the close of the debate and declared that he should support the ministry. Hume and other Reformers followed Lord Howick into the lobby. The ministry was, in this way, saved from defeat, and obtained a majority of 158 votes to 105.[4]

The division proved that the ministry had no influence with the Tories, and that its existence depended on their forbear-

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. pp. 10, 55.

[2] Lord Howick's vote may perhaps have been influenced by the fact that he, like Brougham, owed his seat in Parliament to Lord Cleveland. Unlike Brougham, however, he had not made up his mind to resign his seat in consequence of the change in his patron's opinions.

[3] Roebuck, vol. i. p. 138, note.

[4] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 120. Roebuck, vol. i. p. 138, compared with Spencer, p. 234, note; and Greville, vol. i. p. 275.

ance. The Tories, on their part, showed little inclination to abstain from attacking the Government. Lord Blandford, the eldest son of the Duke of Marlborough, was member for his father's borough of Woodstock. He was a Tory; he regarded the Roman Catholic Relief Bill with abhorrence. So long as rotten boroughs were purchasable in the open market, wealthy Roman Catholics would be always able to find seats for themselves or for their representatives, and special precautions were, therefore, necessary to prevent what Blandford called "the accumulation of Roman Catholic power" in Parliament. Towards the close of the session of 1829, Blandford had moved some resolutions declaring that the existence of rotten boroughs was prejudicial to the best interests of the country. He had been beaten by a large majority.[1] He renewed his proposition at the commencement of 1830. The Whigs, however, were unprepared to support any project of Reform. The Reformers themselves thought the motion premature, and Blandford's resolutions were rejected by a large majority.[2] But the debate gave ministers one more warning that they could place no dependence on their nominal supporters, and that their existence could at any moment be terminated by a combination of Tories, Whigs, and Radicals against them.

Lord Blandford's motion for Reform.

Such a combination seemed every day more probable. On the 25th of February, Stanhope proposed that the Lords should resolve themselves into a committee of the whole House on the internal state of the nation. Stanhope, however, did not receive the support which he expected. The Whigs, still distrusting his views upon the currency, hesitated to commit themselves to an inquiry which might possibly lead to an alteration in the Act of 1819. The extreme Tories, left to themselves, were defeated by a large majority.[3] But on the 18th of March the Duke of Richmond, reviving Stanhope's motion in another form, moved for the appointment of a select committee on the internal state of the country, more

Motions in the House of Lords,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 1688. [2] Ibid., vol. xxii. p. 178.
[3] Ibid., p. 1000.

particularly with respect to the condition of the working classes. There was very little difference in principle between the proposal which Stanhope had made in February and the motion which Richmond made in March. Both were opposed by the ministry. But, in the three weeks' interval between the two propositions, a section of the Whigs had allied themselves with the extreme Tories. The ministry was again in a majority; but the minority was swelled by the votes of Lansdowne, Holland, and other Whigs.[1] A motion similar to Stanhope's made in the House of Commons led to a discussion which was protracted over four nights, but which resulted in a fresh triumph to the Government. The House decided by a very large majority to refuse an inquiry.[2]

and in the House of Commons.

The ministry had thus succeeded in resisting inquiry into the state of the nation. Parliament had shrunk from an investigation, which seemed capable, if it were once commenced, of almost indefinite extension. The Whigs had refrained from committing themselves to a proceeding which extreme Tories regarded as a first step towards the reconsideration of the financial and commercial legislation of Huskisson and Peel. But the same objections could not be urged to another class of motions which were brought against the Government. Sir James Graham was born in 1792; he succeeded to his father's baronetcy in 1824. His father had lived and died a Tory. But Graham, moulding his own opinions upon the writings of Adam Smith, and contracting an acquaintance with a few earnest Whigs, adopted Liberal principles. He was returned in the Liberal interest, in 1818, for Hull; in 1820, for St. Ives. Threatened with a petition, and shrinking from the expense of a contest before a Grenville committee, he retired almost immediately afterwards from the House of Commons, and for the next few years devoted himself to the improvement of his estate, and to the study of economical questions. In 1826 he again

Sir James Graham.

[1] The majority was 141 to 61. The division on Lord Stanhope's motion had been 118 to 25. *Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 538.

[2] 255 votes to 87. Ibid., p. 827.

entered Parliament as member for Carlisle. The commencement of his Parliamentary career was remarkable for many disappointments. He failed in debate, and showed little promise of his future eminence in the House of Commons. His friends gave him more credit for industry than for ability, and thought that he owed more to his acquaintance with Grey than to his own talents. His subsequent career disproved the truth of their conjectures. The man who had been regarded as vain and self-sufficient rose to the first rank in the House of Commons.[1]

His motion for the reduction of salaries.

On the 12th of February, Graham moved for a general reduction of salaries in all the establishments of the country. During the twenty years in which cash payments had been suspended, the public servants had persuaded the Government to raise their pay. The fall in bank paper had reduced the purchasing value of each pound, and had, therefore, justified, or even necessitated, a revision of salaries. But the circumstances which had made a general increase of salaries indispensable had disappeared after the passing of Peel's Act. Bank paper was thenceforward changeable at par; the purchasing value of each pound was restored to its old level; and there was no longer, therefore, any justification for the increase of the salaries of public servants. The augmentation, Graham contended, "should be revised, and every possible reduction effected which can be made without the violation of existing engagements, and without detriment to the public service." Graham's argument was so forcible that the Government did not venture on directly opposing his motion. It put up Dawson, the Secretary to the Treasury, to propose an amendment to it, pledging the House to every possible saving; and Graham expressed himself satisfied with this amendment, and withdrew his own proposal.[2] The majority of the Opposition was willing to wait and see what the ministry intended to do. Hume, however, charac-

[1] Torrens' *Sir J. Graham*, vol. i. pp. 81–236. Greville, vol. ii. p. 90. Roebuck, vol. i. p. 148. Spencer, p. 241, note.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 478.

teristically desired to enforce the moral of the debate in a renewed discussion. On the 15th of February, three days after the adoption of Dawson's amendment, he proposed a repeal and modification of taxation to the largest possible extent which the reductions would admit. The debate which ensued degenerated into a discussion on the currency. But the recollection of Dawson's amendment saved the Government from defeat and gave it a large majority.[1]

Hume's motion for the reduction of taxation.

These successive motions convinced the ministers that it was necessary to lose no time in explaining their own proposals of retrenchment. On the 19th of February, four days after the defeat of Hume's motion, Goulburn rose to redeem the pledge of the ministry, and to explain the economies on which the Government had determined. Large savings were, of course, difficult to effect. Neither the ministry nor the legislature had practically any control over the greater portion of the national expenditure. Nearly two-thirds of the expenditure of the State were due to the charge of the debt and to the Consolidated Fund; and the supply services, which were alone susceptible of retrenchment, only required about £17,600,000 a year. A portion of this sum, moreover, was due to the remuneration of services which had been rendered in the past, and which the legislature could not consistently with good faith refuse to recognise. The ministry, therefore, found itself crippled at every turn in its efforts to economise. But it considered that it could reduce the estimates by £1,031,985.[2] A reduction of the interest on Exchequer bills and other small economies would, it was hoped, increase the gross saving to about £1,300,000.

Goulburn's measure of retrenchment.

[1] 184 votes to 62 (*Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 527).

[2] The reductions were as follows:—

Army Estimates	£453,146
Navy	272,939
Miscellaneous	276,900
Ordnance	29,000
Total	£1,031,985

—*Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 751.

The savings which the ministry thus promised to effect did not equal the retrenchments which men like Hume, free from the responsibilities of office, had thought possible. But they were much greater than the House had expected. A few members doubted their sufficiency, but most members expressed their gratification at Goulburn's announcement, and their readiness to adopt it. But the Opposition, though accepting the ministerial proposals as a whole, did not cease its efforts to effect other small savings. Colonel Davies proposed that the supplies should be voted for only six months instead of for a year; and Hume, proposing a reduction of 10,000 men in the number of the army, was persuaded by Althorp to alter his motion and limit his reduction to 5000. Davies was beaten by 225 votes to 93; Hume by 167 votes to 57.[1] But these divisions, occurring on the night on which the ministry had announced its own proposals, afforded a decisive proof of the temper by which the economists were animated, and of the little forbearance which they intended to extend to the ministry.

The spirit which animated the Opposition was displayed in a more striking manner shortly afterwards. Vesey Fitzgerald, who had been President of the Board of Trade and Treasurer of the Navy since Grant's retirement in 1828, was seized with a serious illness at the close of 1829. He was compelled to retire from his office; and Herries, who had been reposing for two years in the easiest of situations, the Mint, was selected to succeed him. Wellington endeavoured to secure extraneous aid by offering the Mint to Lord Chandos, the eldest son of the Duke of Buckingham. Chandos, however, refused the appointment, and Herries was persuaded to retain the Mint in addition to his new office. The ministry had still to dispose of Fitzgerald's second office, the Treasurership of the Navy. The Opposition thought that the proper way of disposing of it was to dispense with it altogether. The ministry declined to abolish the situation, but reduced the salary attached

Vesey Fitzgerald's illness.

The Treasurership of the Navy.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. pp. 791, 794.

to it from £3000 to £2000 a year,[1] and appointed to it Frankland Lewis, the member for Radnorshire. Lewis was a politician of experience and knowledge. He had already served the Crown in a subordinate capacity, and he had only retired from the ministry with Huskisson and Grant in 1828.[2] His appointment did not add much strength to the Government, and it exposed it to a damaging attack. Graham declared that it was at variance with the pledge which it had given to effect every possible economy, and proposed a resolution condemning it.[3] The Whigs, however, refrained from giving Graham any collective support, and he was beaten by a large majority.[4]

This defeat did not discourage Graham from attempting a further attack on the Government. The Ordnance Office had an establishment which was peculiarly open to criticism. It was represented in Parliament by one peer and seven commoners. The Master-General, Lord Beresford, was a peer; the Lieutenant-General, Lord R. Somerset, was member for Gloucestershire; the Surveyor General, Sir H. Fane, was member for Sandwich; the Storekeeper, Colonel Trench, was member for Cambridge; the Clerk, Spencer Perceval, was member for Newport; the Clerk of the Deliveries, General Phipps, was member for Scarborough; the Secretary to the Master-General, Mr. Holmes, was member for Bishop's Castle; and the Treasurer, Lord Downes, was member for Queenborough. No other department in the Government enjoyed so formidable an array of representatives in Parliament; and economists naturally concluded that, among so many placemen, there must be some redundant officials. The Finance Committee of 1828 endorsed this view, and, in opposition to Wellington's express opinion, recommended the suppression of the Lieutenant-General. On the 29th of March, Graham endeavoured to give effect to the recommendation of the committee by striking the salary of the Lieutenant-General out of the estimates.

The Ordnance Office.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 1123.
[2] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 477.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 256.
[4] 188 votes to 90 (ibid., 295).

He was, however, again unsuccessful. The ministry, sheltering itself under the high authority of its chief, defeated the proposal by 200 votes to 124.[1]

Other motions of the economists.

Nearly all the other motions made during the session by the economists met with a similar fate. A proposal to reduce the salary of the Secretary to the Treasury was defeated by 178 votes to 106.[2] An attack on the expenditure incurred by the missions to South America was stopped by 118 votes to 99.[3] An attempt to reduce the cost of consular establishments was checked by 121 votes to 98.[4] The economists were only able to enforce their views on two occasions. In the course of 1826 Robert Dundas, a son of Lord Melville, had been appointed Commissioner of the Navy; and William Bathurst, a son of Lord Bathurst, Commissioner of the Victualling Department. Lord Bathurst and Lord Melville had already received considerable rewards for the services which they had rendered to the public. Bathurst was a Teller of the Exchequer and a Clerk of the Crown in Chancery. Melville was Keeper of the Privy Seal in Scotland. One of these high officials received nearly £4000 a year, the other of them nearly £3000 a year, for doing nothing. The Commissionerships to which their sons were appointed were redundant offices, and were accordingly selected in 1830 for reduction. The Treasury, however, rewarded the short service of the sinecurists with pensions of £500 and £400 a year. The ministry warmly defended this conduct. The Treasury, it was said, had only applied to Bathurst and Dundas the rule which was ordinarily applicable to every civil servant. The Opposition, however, contended that no rule could be applicable to the son of a sinecurist appointed by his father's interest to a redundant office. The personal questions involved in the motion affected the division. Tory members, angry with their chiefs, were not sorry to obtain an opportunity of this character for displaying their resentment. The pensions were struck out of the estimates by 139 votes to 121.[5]

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 1044.
[2] Ibid., vol. xxiv. p. 526.
[3] Ibid., vol. xxv. p. 45.
[4] Ibid., p. 282.
[5] Ibid., vol. xxiii. p. 958.

One of the two sinecurists had no reason to regret the vote of the evening. A few months later on, Buller, one of the Clerks of the Council, died, and Lord Bathurst bestowed the office on his son William.

The division in which these pensions were rejected was the only one in which the ministry actually suffered defeat. But, on another occasion, it only avoided a reverse by a timely surrender. It has been stated in a previous chapter that the House of Commons had decided in 1824 on spending a sum of £300,000 on the repairs of Windsor. The vote, at the time, had been popular; but the extravagance with which the repairs were made soon alarmed the economists. The estimate was gradually raised from £300,000 to £640,000; from £640,000 to £800,000; and a further £100,000 was required in 1830. The king, however, was lying dangerously ill in Windsor; and the Opposition in consequence desired to abstain from discussing the grant. The ministry, actuated by the same feelings, met them half-way. The vote was withdrawn, and the subject of it was referred to a select committee.[1]

Windsor Castle.

With two exceptions the ministry had succeeded in carrying all its proposals. The reductions which it had voluntarily made had conciliated moderate men on both sides of the House, and had enabled it to resist the motions for further economies. The savings which had been effected facilitated the financial arrangements of the year. The expenditure of 1829 had been placed at £48,333,593; the expenditure of 1830 was placed at only £47,812,000.[2]

The Budget.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxiv. p. 352. The increased sums for the repair of the Castle. voted in the previous years, had provoked a good deal of debate and hostile criticism.

[2]

Debt	£25,671,000
Annuities	2,629,000
Exchequer Bills	750,000
Civil List	2,180,000
Supply Services	16,582,000
Total	£47,812,000

—*Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 319.

The revenue of 1829 had been placed at £51,347,000; the revenue of 1830 was placed at £50,480,000.[1] Goulburn, therefore, had a clear surplus revenue of £2,670,000. But he was able to increase this surplus by dealing on a large scale with the debt. In his last year of office Vansittart had reduced the interest of the Navy 5 per cents. to 4 per cent. per annum. Goulburn decided on effecting a further saving in the same way, and on reducing the interest of this Stock to 3½ per cent. a year. Every holder of the 4 per cent. Stock was to have the option of exchanging it for £100 New 3½ per cent. Stock, or £70 New 5 per cent. Stock. As the scheme dealt with upwards of £150,000,000, it effected an annual saving of rather more than £750,000 a year, and provided a substantial addition to Goulburn's surplus.

Goulburn proposed to apply considerable portions of this surplus to the relief of the poorer and industrial classes. The taxes which appeared to him most worthy of attention were those on leather, beer, and cider. The tax on leather produced an income of £400,000 a year; but it was peculiarly

[1]

Customs	£17,200,000
Excise	19,300,000
Stamps	7,100,000
Assessed Taxes	4,900,000
Post Office	1,500,000
Small Branches and Miscellaneous	480,000
Total	£50,480,000

—*Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 318.

The financial arrangements of 1827, 1828, 1829 were comparatively unimportant. In 1827 the revenue amounted to £54,486,657; the expenditure, without the Sinking Fund, to £53,354,430. (*Hansard*, vol. xix. p. 1652.) In 1828 the revenue was placed at £53,902,030, the expenditure at £50,104,522. (Ibid., p. 1659.) In 1829 the revenue was placed at £51,347,000, the expenditure at £48,333,593. (Ibid., vol. xxi. p. 1178.) The reductions in 1829 were due to the termination of Vansittart's scheme for commuting the life annuities for a fixed sum of £2,800,000 a year. The trustees had disposed of a portion of their annuity to the Bank of England; in return for which the Bank had undertaken to pay pensions up to 1828. The agreement expired in 1828; and the Finance Committee recommended that it should not be renewed. (*Return of Public Income and Expenditure*, pt. ii. p. 517.) In 1828 the Sinking Fund was reduced to £3,000,000; and in 1829, in accordance with the recommendations of the Finance Committee, it was finally reduced to the actual surplus. (Ibid., p. 720.)

oppressive to the trade, and Goulburn decided on abolishing it. The duty on beer, independently of the malt tax, produced a revenue of £3,000,000; and it was also selected for repeal. The duty on cider did not yield more than £25,000 or £30,000 a year, and it naturally stood or fell with the tax on beer. Goulburn, therefore, proposed to repeal taxation yielding in the aggregate nearly £3,500,000 a year.

Some portions of this scheme were readily accepted. No one could defend the duty on leather. It was a commodity which it was necessary for the poor to use, and which it was therefore desirable to render as cheap as possible. The retention of the duty compelled the manufacturer to carry on his business under the superintendence of an excise officer, and, therefore, subjected him to the annoying restrictions which are inseparable from a supervision of this character. Every one was, therefore, in favour of reducing the tax on leather. No one objected to the repeal of the duty on cider; but a violent opposition was raised to any alteration in the duties on beer. Up to 1830 the sale of beer had been confined to those persons who had obtained a license from the magistrates of the district in which they resided. The magistrates were in the habit of conferring these licenses on the occupiers of particular houses; and the great brewers, in consequence, bought up these houses, or advanced money to their proprietors. In practice, then, a few brewers of capital and position had obtained a monopoly of the trade in beer. In repealing the beer duties the ministry decided on authorising the Commissioners of Excise to license any persons to sell beer on the payment of £2, 2*s.* a year. The proposal excited vehement opposition. Country gentlemen, who would have prefered the reduction of the malt tax to the remission of the beer duties; brewers, who desired to retain the trade in their own hands; licensed victuallers, trembling at the possible competition of beershops; Tories, who objected to the withdrawal of protection from any one; united in attacking the measure. Four hundred and eighty-three petitions were presented against the bill, while only

The creation of beershops.

eight were addressed to the House of Commons in its favour. In both houses of Parliament an endeavour was made to limit the scope of the bill, and to prevent the beer bought in the new beerhouses being drunk on the premises. The attempt was defeated in the House of Commons by 138 votes to 108, and in the House of Lords by a still larger majority.[1]

Goulburn's budget had effected a considerable reduction in the burdens upon the nation; but the Opposition was not satisfied with the relief which the taxpayers had received. Poulett Thomson, a young Russia merchant, familiar with the views of the economical writers of his time, desired to repeal the taxes on timber, coal, hemp, glass, paper, and other articles, and to reduce the duties on soap, barilla, tea, tobacco, spirits, wine, and sugar. His proposal involved a large reduction of revenue; and Thomson abstained from explaining how the loss which would thus be occasioned could be supplied. Althorp, however, who was a warm friend of Thomson's, had the courage to declare that, if no other means of doing so were possible, the property tax should be reimposed. The suggestion did not reconcile the Whigs to Thomson's motion. It was regarded as rash and unsound. Althorp was told that, if he broached such doctrines, he would be the most unpopular man in England. Such being the opinion of the Whigs, the result of the debate was certain. The measure of free trade which Poulett Thomson was contemplating could only be secured by the imposition of direct taxation; and the Whigs, as a body, still preferred the continuance of the existing system to the revival of the income tax. Thomson's motion was accordingly rejected by a large majority.[2]

Poulett Thomson's motion for free trade.

The opposition had little cause to congratulate itself on the result of these discussions. The debate on the address had nearly resulted in the defeat of the Government; yet, ever since the date of it, the Ministry had been able to command a majority in almost every division.

The disorganisation of the Opposition.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxv. pp. 580, 1104.
[2] 167 votes to 78. *Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 918.

Every one was dissatisfied with the Government, but the Opposition had no cohesion. Split into numerous bodies, under various leaders, it was only able to wage a guerilla warfare, and was rarely able to combine its whole force on any particular occasion. Since the death of Ponsonby in 1816 the Whig party in the House of Commons had never really enjoyed the advantage of a leader. Tierney had nominally acted as Ponsonby's successor; but Tierney had never enjoyed the confidence of the entire Opposition. He abdicated the lead in 1821, and thenceforward the Opposition remained without a head. Tierney died suddenly in January 1830. At the time of his death there were only two members of the House of Commons who had the slightest claim to lead the Whig party. Brougham had no rival in ability and eloquence, but Brougham's great qualifications had never gained for him the confidence of the Whigs. The magnates of the party considered that the lead should be entrusted to one of themselves; and Brougham had diminished his own chances by the support which he had extended to Canning in 1827. Brougham being unacceptable to the party, the more moderate members of it conceived the possibility of enrolling themselves under Lord Althorp's guidance. "Honest Jack Althorp" had been steadily rising in the opinion of his friends. His excellent judgment; his enlightened opinions on political, religious, and economical subjects; his well-known honesty; and his high social position, fitted him for the first place in an assembly of English gentlemen. During the whole of the session of 1830 some of his more immediate friends had been in the habit of meeting at his chambers in the Albany to discuss the propriety of various proceedings. The chance remark of a member of the Government that the Opposition was a loose bundle of sticks induced one or two Whigs to propose that Althorp should be formally invested with the lead. A large section of the party endorsing the suggestion, Althorp accepted the situation which was thus entrusted to him. He took an early opportunity of intimating in the House of Commons that he was no longer only expounding his own opinions,

Althorp selected for the lead.

but that he had become the spokesman of a party. Peel started with surprise when the declaration was made, his experience necessarily suggesting to him the consequences of an organised Opposition.[1]

During the remainder of the session, however, the improved organisation of the Whigs had no material effect on Parliamentary tactics. The same reason which had checked the discussion of the vote for Windsor prevented any real attack being made on the ministry. For some years George IV. had been suffering from weak health; he had been unequal to the discharge of many of the duties of his position; and he had withdrawn himself more and more from the public gaze, and had retired more and more completely into the narrow circle of his favourites and his attendants. His wretched health made every one speculate on the possibility of his death; but the care of his medical advisers repaired his shattered constitution and prolonged his feeble life. Early in 1830, however, his immediate suite were no longer able to conceal the critical condition of the monarch. In the middle of April a bulletin announcing his illness was issued to the public. His growing feebleness compelled him in May to give up signing the various documents which technically required his signature. The legislature, on the advice of the ministry, passed a temporary law allowing the sign manual to be affixed to a paper, in the king's presence, by a stamp.[2] The bill, which was passed in the end of May, relieved the king during the last month of his unhappy life from some of the labours of his situation. Real relief it was impossible to afford him. An ossification of the heart produced an embarrassment in breathing, and a violent cough increased his distress. His miserable life had not won for him a single friend to cheer his later moments. The ruling favourite stayed at the Castle, but she only remained for the sake of plundering the establishment.[3] The king's valets, imitating the example of their betters, endeavoured to secure for themselves the ward-

The illness of the king.

1 Althorp, p. 246. Roebuck, vol. i. p. 466.

2 *Hansard*, vol. xxiv. pp. 1002, 1062.

3 Greville, vol. ii. p. 31.

robe of their dying master. No one seems to have taken any interest in the king. Becoming continually weaker and weaker, the rupture of a blood-vessel in the stomach at length released him from further suffering. He died on the 26th of June,[1] and his attendants had leisure to amuse themselves with examining the innumerable ladies' gloves, lockets of hair, and other trophies which their singular master had preserved,[2] and to marvel at the one trait of constancy which threw a partial gleam on his unhappy character —that he had died with Mrs. Fitzherbert's locket round his neck.

His death.

The character of George IV. has already been described in these pages. It is unnecessary to supplement that description here. For one hundred and thirty years before his accession Britain had never known a worse sovereign. Yet she owes more to George IV.'s vices than to George III.'s virtues. It is possible that, if George IV. had inherited his father's virtue's, his influence would have prevented his ministers from proposing the great religious reforms which are the distinguishing feature of his reign. Wellington, like Pitt, might have recoiled from driving an estimable sovereign out of his mind, or from forcing him into exile. They persevered in their policy, in opposition to the king's wishes, because his threat to retire to Hanover boomed harmlessly, like an unshotted gun, on their ears. It was very improbable that the king would carry out his threat; it was still more unlikely that any one would care if he did so. His next heir, it was true, was eccentric, but he was popular; he was more liberal in his views than his elder brother; and his accession to the throne was certain to be widely welcomed. The anxiety which a whole nation felt to prolong the virtuous rule of George III. induced Pitt to yield his own opinions to his master's. The utter indifference of every one towards George IV. deprived the selfish king of the influence which he might otherwise have acquired in the counsels of his advisers.

His character.

[1] For the king's illness see Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vii. pp. 7, 28, 29, 31, 58, 102. For the Signet Bill, ibid., pp. 9, 45, 59, 66.

[2] Greville, vol. ii. p. 190.

William IV., who succeeded to the throne, seemed to have been designed by nature as a contrast to his brother. The gossips who were familiar with the inner life of the royal family were, indeed, full of good stories which illustrated the eccentricity of the new king.[1] But his eccentricities were exactly suited to the temper of the time. Years had passed since George IV. had walked about London publicly. Within a month of his accession William IV. was walking up St. James's Street alone, mobbed, and even kissed, by his subjects, and able only with difficulty to rescue himself from their embarrassing attentions and to escape to his palace. The Duke of Clarence's unceasing activity in office had necessitated his removal from the Admiralty. William IV. passed a long summer's day reviewing troops, holding drawing-rooms, or attending to other matters. Never before had London seen so unceremonious and so good-natured a king. He had a good-humoured remark for every one. He would sit in his carriage with his back to the horses, or stop his coach to drop a friend at his own door. Half-shocked, half-amused, at these eccentricities, which seemed the more peculiar after the rigid etiquette of George IV., people wondered whether the mind of the king would continue sane, or whether mere oddity would degenerate into lunacy.

William IV.

In the meanwhile the legislature hastily completed the work which it was still necessary to perform. The law required that a dissolution should take place within six months of the demise of the crown; and the ministry considered that it would be "conducive to the general convenience and to the public interests" that the new Parliament should meet with as little delay as possible. In accordance with the precedent which had been established ten years before, the various measures which were already before the legislature were hastily disposed of. The ministry refused to touch any new subject of importance; they even

Parliament dissolved.

[1] Sir Henry Cooke, writing on the 16th of June 1830, declared that "the general bet is that it is even chance that Clarence is in a strait-waistcoat before the king dies."—Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vii. p. 93.

declined to provide for the possible demise of the crown before the meeting of the new Parliament,[1] or to do more than make a temporary provision for the Civil List. On the 23rd of July the Parliament was prorogued; on the following day it was dissolved by proclamation.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxv. p. 1067.

END OF VOL. II.

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